FACULTY OF TEACHING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MESSINA

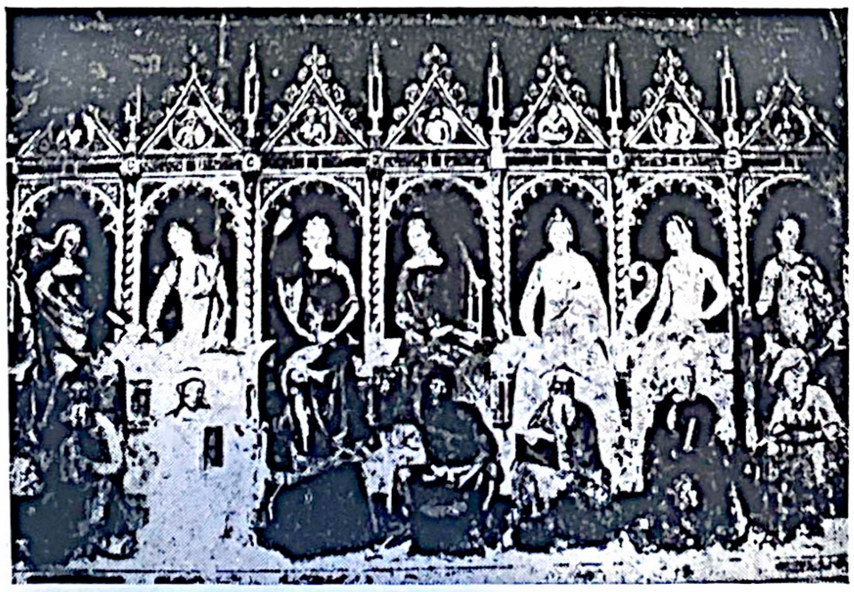
NOTEBOOKS of THE NEW ANNALS

7

PETER A. ZVETEREMICH

PARVUS

AN ANTICIPATORY FIGURE



HERDER PUBLISHER
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To Antonio Mazzarino

Warning

This essay aims to address, without assuming exhausting them, some of the knots of Parvus' theoretical, political and economic thought that are better used to outline his anticipatory role in a series of crucial moments and problems for the history of Russia and Europe. In this sense, we trust that it can contribute both to a better knowledge of such a multiform and complex figure, whose dimensions turn out to be much greater than the bibliography on the subject suggests; and to enrich with it the panorama of those events and phenomena in which he often had a part

Decisive, but still insufficiently recognized.

Born in parallel, and as a corollary, to my biography of Parvus of imminent publication by Rizzoli Editore, essay has benefited from a much broader research, but deliberately restricts its object to the scope of its mentioned, allowing itself only a quick excursus to the qualities of Parvus as a writer. The points touched on here remain predominantly of a historiographical nature and, by giving at least the extremes of the forerunner character of the Parvusian figure (from the Marxist debate at the turn of the century to the pre-Keynesian theses on the economic structure and unity of Europe) will perhaps be able to stimulate - this is our hope - other investigations in this regard.

P. a. zv.

Parvus, since 1895 definitive pseudonym (after others such as Ignatieff, Unus, Danilov, Molotov and various acronyms) of Izrail' Lazarevič Gelfand (name transmuted and transcribed in the West, from where

He came through Yiddish, with Alexander Israel Helphand), was born in 1867 in Berezino, a town on the almost homonymous Napoleonic river

Memory, from a family originally from Odessa, where it returned in 1870 and where ours was trained and completed its studies until the gymnasium license. Here he adhered to the ideals

Revolutionaries and approached Marxism through N. I. Ziber (Sieber), economist from Kiev of Swiss origin, first scholar and popularizer of Marx in Russia. In 1887 he settled in Switzerland, where he graduated in 1891 from the University of Basel. In the same year he moved to Germany, immediately conquering a prominent place in the ranks of the Spd and on its press despite his double allogeny. Here he worked as a politician, theorist, economist

Mixed, writer and publisher, intervening between 1900 and 1908 also in the debate of the Russian Marxists on the party and the revolution, in which he also took part in person in 1905-06 in Petersburg with an eminent role. From 1910 to the end of 1914 he lived in Constantinople; then in Copenhagen, Zurich and Berlin.

During the First World War he was the theorist and the main architect of Germany's Revolutionierungspolitik towards Russia, in the context of which Lenin returned from Switzerland in April 1917. It aimed at a democratic revolution in Russia, which would allow peace with Germany and the alliance of the socialist forces of the two countries as a factor of stability and progress in Europe. The party dictatorship immediately established by Lenin saw in him the first opponent of a socialist side not only theoretical, but also conspiratorial. Already in 1910 he had posed in his books the problem of which economic system

Alternative to capitalism knew how to offer socialism, studying it as an economist as well as a politician, so that, beyond the determining reasons for a democratic socialist vision, he could not give any credit to Bolshevik improvisation in economics, to a state 'socialism' decreed from above. In Bolshevism he saw the reconfirmation of Russian expansionist absolutism and, also in relation to this fact that he always highlighted and today confirmed by history, from 1918 to his death he propugated a united Europe, capable of constituting an economic and political force in the face of the two prevaricant powers: America and Russia. He died in Berlin in December 1924, leaving a conspicuous work, deep and fierce in thought, insightful

- Is inventive in writing, pervaded by a humanistic vein,
- Nourished by historical intuitions and anticipations.

Parvus emerges as a central figure of Marxism and socialism alongside, but always one step ahead, of Kautsky: Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky; as well as the European history of the First two decades of the century. It is therefore surprising that Western Marxist historiography in its extensive literature has dealt with his work only in a marginal way, while it is not surprising that in the USSR his name is covered by silence after the first edition of the Bol'šaja sovetskaja. enciklopedija and it is inescapable only in the complete editions of Lenin: already less than a week after his death, Stalin, to discredit Trotsky, pointed to Parvus as the first person responsible for heresy.

- Here we wanted to touch only some of those moments of the Parvusian work that in our opinion are worth redeeming his figure and giving him back the location he is entitled to, even if this can invalidate certain current historiographical schemes. As for the merits of the ideas and theories debated, we are of the opinion that they belong to a historical past and only in this angle can they still be the object of attention. Two well-known aspects, however, must be taken into consideration: 1) that ideas live and have body, even if they lack a scientific support, even to the extent that they are present in the heads of men: and millions of men even today "believe" not only generically, and each in their own way, in socialism (that is, a platonic idea never so far unrealized), but specifically in the

Marxist revolutionary socialism; it is therefore a phenomenon of reality, as is the revival of Islamism in a no less vast area of followers; 2) that ideas, when organized in semantic (and therefore of thought) self-sufficient and vital, resist time as well as the works of poetry and for the same reasons: for this reason we still benefit from Kant and Homer, the Bible and Marx; even if distant, we study them as living organisms of concepts and images.

ZIP. I

PARVUS WRITER

I notice that many philosophers, religious thinkers, politicians, economists, historians and even scientists, not to mention men working in art even if not with the means of the word, are at the same time quality writers and sometimes even great.

Although not dedicating themselves to fiction, but using the linguistic tool on a factual-conceptual subject, they enter literature and often conquer a place of honor, sometimes overpowering its devoted followers, thanks to their expressive skills that lead them to create their own original and inventive language in the representation of the respective object of interest. The examples are countless: from classical antiquity to the Christian Middle Ages and the Renaissance to go back to the modern age to the contemporaneity, while remaining in the context of Western culture, which, however, cannot be forgotten that the East is flanked: from Persia to India, from Islam to China. In the West, the 19th century opens with the sign of acquired and nevertheless strongly present names such as Rousseau, Kant

Humboldt, but soon sees Hegel, Tocqueville, Mill. The Socialism has the Its authors in Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen, Proud. Russia gives Herzen and Chernyševskij. But a completely anomalous thinker arises, who is from the socialist area, but transcends it; who already at the origins more than from the utopians starts from Smith and Ricardo and from classical philosophy to erect his Extraordinary system of interpretation and remaking of the world. Like that of Kant, of Hegel, of others before them, it is an autonomous structure, a "useless" machine that however Move. Unlike other thinkers and their systems, which function as models in a research laboratory and only interest the initiates and are accomplished and closed in their

Perfect organicity, Marx builds his own structure assuming that it must act outdoors, in the reality of life, demonstrating the fact that it must be changed and as a machine to hook it, change it. Apart from this, which here in question is not relevant but pertinently had to be remembered, because it follows the immense success and the diffusion that his thought will quickly have, condition of everything, for It like

For others, it is the expression, the semantic organism in which this thought is structured and enucleated. For this reason alone, Marx is a writer, as are all the great thinkers, although alien from the truffles in use among the literati; if then in him there are stylistic accessories that make the fact more evident, this is enriching-

Ment, but not decisive.

That Marx was necessarily a writer together with being an economic-political thinker, a writer precisely for the sole fact that otherwise his economic-political thought would not only not have been communicable, but would not have existed as such or at least only in a fragmentary and evanescent way and therefore devoid of that enormous capacity of influence, then few of influence, then few would understand it, and we would say no one if the scruples of not having done that research on all the literature of the time that would be necessary, but here it is disproportionate to theme. Who understood it, let's say for now reductively among the first, since he could be the first ever, was Parvus. With the pseudonym I.H. (Israel Helphand in 1892

He wrote in the essay An economic sleight of hand. A Böhm-Bawerkeide: « Marx's Capital, as it is known (his pretty

Condescension - my note), also contains splendid aspects

Critical-literary. In a classic way he more than once outlines in a couple of sentences, in a notation, in an image, an entire scientific direction or a scientific system in his

Concate-

Nation so clearly and insightfully that it has no way to escape. They are rings of light, which vividly and clearly illuminate the dark caverns and the intricate false roads of political-economic thought, and, when such a ray of light breaks in, it is fixed forever »'. Later Parvus

Underli-

SJI1 I.H., Economic Pocket Players. A Böhm-Bawerkiade, in "Neue Zeit", 1891-92, B. I, pp. 590.91.

He will still have the quality of Marx as a writer, modernly seeing the stylistic qualities in relation to the structure of the work ' Clearly he also wants to be inspired by Marx's way of writing as well as his theory and therefore it should be remembered here, although known, also for his location, that Marx and the ideal current and the political movement he promoted with Engels create a soul of political thinkers. In Germany, in the century, Kautsky, Bernstein, Mehring and ParVus, which excels for depth of thought and expressive inventiveness; in Russia, Plechanov, Struve, Tugan-Baranovsky, Frank to which they will be added in chronological order Parvus, Lenin, Trotsky and others. But Parvus is a bilingual writer, who speaks both Russian and German. Trotsky has a reputation as a brilliant pen and it is true, and this is his limit: I live epidermal journalism, polemic, lack of deepening and play on effect even in theoretical works. Plechanov is professor and flat, as in another sense Struve. As for Lenin, the writer agrees with the judgment of Kornelij Cukovsky, one of the sharpest contemporary Russian literary critics as well as a poet, beyond any suspicion of preconceived aversion as he greeted the revolutionary advent like many and lived the whole tragedy until his death in Moscow. « Recently I gave Lenin a look again — he wrote at a late age — not a living word, no development of style, no development of thought.»'. Lenin's prose is falsely apodictic, didacticLica, arid, infiorata only of polemical intemperances and epithets. In a linguistic-literary discourse, Stalin's monstrous writing with his combination of Byzantine-georgian fable and Byzantine-Scholasticism is absurdly much more interesting. But he is outside the period that interests us here. Receding to Par-

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2 PARVUS, The German Social Democracy. The Hochburg des Sozialismus, in « Glocke », N. 1, 1915, p. 20 (« The difficulties of the Marxian masterpiece do not lie in the fact that Marx did not know how to write in a clear German language. He belongs to the best German designers. The difficulties lie: 1) in the strong concentration of thought; 2) in the construction of the work »).

Is 3 R. ORLOVA-L. KOPELEV, Cudo K. Cukovskogo [The miracle of K. Cu-kovskij], in «SSSR. Vnutrennie protivorečija», No. 4, 1982, New York.

p. 121.

Vus, since he

He wrote much more in German, immersed in the

Cultural circulation of Germany, we must see its location mainly among the political thinkers of this country contemporary to it. And, among these, you can approach Kautsky, Weber, Hilferding, but also on them he has, alternatively, the privilege of deep penetration of concepts and expressive happiness.

They are already present in the first essays of '92: the one cited on Böhm-Bawerk and the one on the situation in Russia*, which have the broad European vision and the humanistic breath of a Herzen and a Dobroljubov, while starting from a reasoning of political economy and statistical analysis. And already here emerge the capacity of synthesis, conciseness, creation of images and metaphors. Let's take the first one and from the beginning we read:

«These properties of goods remain equal in every change in the economic formation of individual economies: pepper is equally strong in the poor lunch of a worker and on the luxurious table of a bonvivant » 5. Let those who read it be warned that here it is the Marxist theory of value-work, one of the most controversial points still cause of philosophical-economic-philosophical disputes, but now here this does not interest us, but Parvus' approach to the subject, which appears typically literary for a subject that is completely scientific. In the same writing we often find resorts to figures of the natural world to explain concepts of economic theory: "Thus an avalanche falls with the same speed and with the same crescendo of power whether on its way it shatters houses and dilani and overwhelms human things, whether it rolls on bare cliffs and on sandy hills". We will take different points from different works, from different periods and in different languages (German and Russian) to mention this persistence of approach, since, given the dimension of Parvus' work and given the purely indicative intent of these lines of ours, we cannot aspire to a treatment here,

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4 Cfr. cap. III, no. 38.

5 PARVUS, op. cit., p. 525. Expressions in another language than the original text such as cursives are always Aa. mentioned.

• Ibidem, p. 555.

But simply to give a signal. In the aforementioned essay of '92 we read:

> «The sky is tinged with pink for the Russian capital: industrial workers, traders, landowners can fill their pockets and fraternally shake hands for the great campaign of the tramutation of human labor into
>
> Merchandise values
> Of the commodity values in resonant currency. Already co-
> Mincia the movement. It already starts. Enrich yourself! »?.

In Statsstreich und politischer Massenstreik of '96 there is This image of the revolutionary moment:

> « The thousands of threads of the society's puppet theater
> For a moment they loosened uper. And, together with the occupations
> Daily tions, it is Interrupted the daily Existence **nor-**
> Bad. Comfort has disappeared, sleepiness has volatized, traditions have been forgotten, boredom has dissipated, the pettiness of life have passed into the background and only one animated the crowd in motion, running, bubbling, stormy: political interest. In the excited human chaos the will of the individual has dissolved and the laws of mass movement have come into force »*;

And again:

> «The intermittent fire of the newspapers, ridicule, jokes,
> Dileggi, pin pricks, club shots, criticism, argo-
> Mentation, moralisms, threats, resolutions, assemblies, petitions
> Tions, protests, demonstrations, .Rumbles, shouts, Im-
> Patience of the crowd, gatherings — finally, revolution! ';
> «The courage of the people is not in killing, but in the mo-
> To laugh »; « They were the nerve ganglia of the crowd fused into a single huge monster in the open air, sensitive nerves, which with ver-
> Tiginosa Speed They transmitted, created, inflated and ali-
> They lied Impressions, news, Voices, thoughts, Words,
> Moods..».

In Handelskrisis und Gewerkschaften°, whose subject matter is completely alien from poetry, we find this passage that we would say Dostoevsky, even already refracted in Camus and Sartre:

> « Even the idea of an exultant capitalist productive development, alien from crisis, could only be born in the cer-

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1 See cap. III, no. 38, "Berliner Vorwärts", 17.6.1892, p. 2.

8 See chapter IV, no. **88.**

' Op. cit., p. 15; See below, chap. V, no. 107.

> Fleece of a man who sits in a dark room and doesn't observe the world, but Simply his project reflex Tattooed on the wall by a small bundle of rays _That filter Through A narrow crack; in this case everything appears to him On a reduced scale: tiny, achromatic, aphonic, without friction ».

In Opportunismus in der Praxis " among other things we take:

> « The supposed incomprehensibility depends on the very absence of opportunism. It is he who first of all and most of all does not understand himself... At its first appearance in the world it is only a gradation, a nuance, a speck, and, as much as it grows, it is never composed of a system, a doctrine or at least a principle; re-Shapeless, gelatinous mane ».

These examples, deliberately taken from texts in which, in general, for their own character, expressive language is not given, could be made a iosa. They reveal on the part of the author a non-technical approach to matter (any matter), but nourished by a broader thought, by a cultural consciousness Rale and, with it, but more and in the given decisive case, from an awareness of the meaning of writing and the ability to dominate it.

Also in personal letters:

> «You feel like a kind of carp of the orthodoxy, which in every little fish that swims in the ideological abysses of the movement see a pike ready to devour them. Look at the river in flood! What doesn't drag with it: debris, spor-Cizia, clods of earth, but the ice breaks and dozens of different streams run to the surface. You have sat on the bank and want to remove the foam and clean the tor-bidume with a soup spoon »"!.

Also in the controversy with Lenin:

> And?« He is crouched down and strives to collect political life under his paper hat, snorting and getting angry because she always comes out and runs away massively from

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10 Cfr. cap. V, n. 107, and op. cit., p. 659.

I! Social-demokratičeskoe dviženie v Rossii, t. I, Moskva 1928. Time: 'Russian Reprint Series', LVII, The Hague 1967, p. 139. From now on referred to as SDD.

> All parties; he takes his arms and puffs up, calling a translator anyone who finds political development and revolutionary struggle outside the Leninist cap » 12.

So in a 1905 article on the famous "Iskra". Talking about Trotsky and himself when they led the revolution of the

1905 at the head of the Petersburg Soviet:

> « These gentlemen believe that the noise generates the storm. I have already illustrated which forces pushed forward the revolution and exasperated the agitation. And we were just those harp strings on which the hurricane sounded
>
> Of the revolution. We were the initiators of the revolution and we were moving forward on the path on which the
>
> Heavy masses that moved behind us » 13.

This is in the passionate and historically important essay Nastojaščee političeskoe položenie i vidy na buduščee, published in Petersburg in 1906. But Parvus has dozens of essays and theoretical, political, economic articles - considering only the main ones, otherwise they would be hundreds -, which cover an arc that goes from 1891 to 1924 and, even if only in the aspect that interests us here, the field of investigation that is offered is imposing.

In addition to this, he wrote works that have a direct relevance to literature, which fall into the categories of short story, memoirs, theater. Among the main ones, the first is Russia that is hungry. Travel impressions, observations, research"*, the result of a clandestine journey of a few months deep into his native country made in 1899 together with the doctor Carl Lehmann, who appears as co-author of the book, but in fact only took care of the documentary parts. It is a work of great dimensions, another six hundred pages, but above all of great breath, which grants immediate contact to the reader with men, the cities, the countryside, the nature of Russia traveled from Petersburg to Moscow to the regions of the Volga and beyond by train, river vapors, horse mail shots; with the return to the Trans-Siberian convoy, hundreds of meetings

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12 PARVUS, RiR, p. 169. See chapter VI, n. 91.

13 PARVUS, RiR, p. 217. See chapter VI, n. 91.

14. C. LEHMANN u. PARVUS, The Russian Hunger. Reiseeindrücke, Beo-.
Bachtungen, Untersuchungen, Stuttgart 1900.

(The truth burns the eyes) in Russian and rewritten by him in German with the title Im Kampf um die Wahrheit". It is also a story: passionate, presumptuous, painful, polemical, serenely historical and at the same time partisan, truthful and at the same time lying: a real testimony and jointly an invention of himself (to claim that role that they did not want to recognize or did not seem to him to him to be recognized enough, but whose recognition was hindered by state and German and Leninian secrets, not even known to all the leaders of the party).

And Parvus in this "confession" walks on the eggs, because not even for him, then, it is good to discover certain cards of a game in which he is still fully involved. A writing, therefore, of extreme interest precisely because of its twisted and forced nature, although not readable to an unsuspecting eye, but only on the basis of the knowledge of all the accessories. But, precisely for this reason, also not negligible proof of literary organization in a mixed structure of evocation and controversy, of factuality and evasion, of sincerity and reticence. These elements are found, albeit to a lesser extent, in other polemical-autobiographical writings, such as the one on Kautsky, which contains good passages, and the one on his expulsion from Switzerland. "

,So He also wrote a curious unique act: A conversation about wartime ', lively and scratchy, whose action takes place on a ship that shuttles between Denmark and Sweden and stages a cosmopolitan group of people: a pleasant young lady, journalist or actress, a Swedish banker, businessmen and adventurers of high bondo. Their quiet chat in the luxurious steam restaurant during the night navigation on the Baltic Sea in a storm touches the problems of peace and war, of the politics of the various countries, giving a picturesque psychological and custom picture.

In his weekly magazine « Glocke » (1915-24) Parvus gave ample space to the problems of culture with columns of

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16 PARvus, Pravda glaza kolet, Stockholm 1918; In Kampf um die WahrHeit, Berlin 1918.

551117 PARvus, Philister over me! Meine Antwort an K. Kautsky, « Glo-cke», 1919; pp. 1331-39; Meine Entfernung aus der Schweiz, ibidem, 1919, Pp. 1482-89, 1507-14.

18 PARVUS, Ein Gespräch zur Kriegszeit, « Glockene », n. 1, 1916, pp. 24-35.

Philosophy, history, literature, art, theater, in which critical essays and poetic, satirical texts, book reviews and more were published.
From the time when the boy in Odessa became passionate about the Ukrainian revolutionary poet Taras Sevchenko, to the Cossack legends, literature has always remained for him an indispensable food, a source of lessons and solicitations even in the political exercise. He wrote to Potresov in 1908: "There are phenomena... interesting in literature and art, and in general the world is getting younger every day". It was the period in which, according to

Certain

Historiography, Russia had fallen into the darkness of the reaction, while instead it was becoming a modern country and in science and culture it was at the forefront with names now universally recognized. In music they were Skrjabin and Stravinsky; in painting Malevič and Kandinskij; in literature Ivanov, Blok, Belyj, Remizov, Sologub to say the name of others. Expressionism was about to explode in Germany.

To conclude we want to quote a step that manifests
How much Parvus had understood (even in the most significant meaning of the Latin comprehend) the verb, the magical power of the word:

> «The condition of German literature, of all the richness of concepts and words that are contained in the German language would be sad if with legal formulas it were possible to eradicate from social life the circle of ideas that has grown there and grows every day! With paragraphs of the law you can capture words but not concepts. In fact, they can be associated in continuously new combinations and contrasts. They are as multiform as life itself.
>
> And, the more developed a literature is, the more multiple the forms of the concepts. More than a century ago Klopstock wrote these proud words:
>
> « That doesn't live with the German language
> In the kühnen Wettstreit wage!
> She is — that I'm short, with her Kraft is wise -
> An mannigfalt'ger Uranlage
> To ever newer and yet German Turn Reich».
>
> And today, after Klopstock, Lessing, Goethe,
>
> Schiller, Fichte, Heine, Lassalle and others, today believe it is possible to destroy the grandiose cultural movement that has been developing for many decades, prohibiting with the scareman of the

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19 SDD, p. 182.

Punishment to pronounce some words and expressions! In fact, the police war is essentially reduced to this » 20.

He wrote this in the already cited Staatsstreich und politischer Massenstreik, an eminently political text, in its field brilliantly percursore and later operating in the events. Here there was the intuition and the affirmation of the value of semantics for politics, of which we will become aware decades later with the development of linguistic studies, of which there will also be in the middle of our century who will make a doctrine.

But who could have felt such a relationship in the 1990s if not a politician in which the writer's nerve also throbbed? I would now like to underline with that step the fusion of Parvus

Theoretical and political and of the Parvus writer, here, for

Now, as proof, of this quality of his.

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[20] Cfr. cap. IV, no. 88.

ZIP. II

THE FIRST REPLY TO THE FAREWELL TO MARX
BY BÖHM-BAWERK

Economical pocket players. Eine Böhm-Bawerkiade"1 was the essay with which Parvus first in 1892 contexted the questioning of Marx contained in the volume Geschichte und Kritik der Kapitalzinstheorien by E. Böhm-Bawerk published in the same year. The author was a quality exponent of the Austrian economic school, known in those years for the seriousness of his studies and the finesse of his reasoning. These are themes of strict economic specialization and related to the most problematic knots of Capital, but, since in the Marxist debate they are still painful today after having been addressed (subsequently to Parvus) by the greatest scholars of Marxism through various generations (K. Kautsky, E. Bernstein, R. Luxembourg, R. Hil-ferding, P. Sweezy, G. Lukács, M. H. Dobb and, among Italians, in the most relevant way by L. Colletti), highlights the meaning of Parvus' early intervention, of which no mention is found in the aforementioned authors. If you consider Marx's as a theoretical building, it appears like this Complexus and closely interconnected that, if a stone is removed, the entire building is compromised and threatens to collapse.
This was always feared especially by the school of Marxism for whom it was precisely first and foremost a building, therefore

A system, not an open proposal, a method. Hence the endless disquisitions on the many problems it raises and particularly on concepts such as "abstract work", "value",

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21 See chapter I, no. 1.

« value of use », « time work », « fetishism of goods », especially since Marx is not clear in this regard. Also other are the Marxian concepts that are still disputed today, but we limit ourselves to the former, because they are addressed by Böhm-Bawerk in the aforementioned work and then in a subsequent writing ". Not to this which is from '96, but to the said work Parvus replied with his essay, indicating, — as he himself later recalled — « the social character of the problem already in 1892, therefore several years before the publication of the third part of Capital, in my article against Böhm-Bawerk 2. In this answer, he deals at length with the social character of work as an "end-conscious activity" (zielbewusste Thätigkeit), as "the only steering element in production" (das einzige richtende Element in der Produktion), arguing with what he calls the "theory of the interest of capital" (Kapitalzinstheorie) of Böhm-Bawerk, erected by him on the categories of "present and future in the economy" (Gegenwart und Zukunft in der Wirtschaft).

Parvus accuses him of neglecting the social dimension of work, since "the two false ways: the one that Marx designates as fetishism and the one we have learned from Böhm-Bawerk, proceed separately in their further course, but stem from the same source, that is, from the complete misreknowledge of the economic structure, of the strength of economic conditions".
"What is value" for Böhm-Bawerk, - asks Parvus polemically; and answers: "The meaning that the individual attributes to a good or a complex of goods", adding "for him all economic phenomena are the result of subjective evaluations" 2.

After addressing the theme of the separation between work and life of the employer, that is, of alienation, Parvus cites as a testimony of the transmutation of labor into value, that is, of the commitment of the human person in work and in time-labor that turns into a value separated from it, abstract, Marx's famous passage on the fetishism of the first chapter of the first part of Capital (« The fetish character of the commodity and its

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22 E. BöHM-BAWERK, Zum Abschluss des Marxschen System, Vienna 1896.

23 PARvus, op. cit., p. 21.

24 PARvus, op. cit., p. 594.

Mystery »). Here we do not go into an examination of the Marxist concept of "abstract work" which, as L. Colletti writes, "is the 'nail' of the whole theory of value", "never really faced" either by Kautsky, or by Luxemburg, or by Lenin". He will return there in 1915, much more confident and fierce than he is now twenty-five years old, entering into the merits of a judgment on the same Marxian reasoning. Now he limits himself to commenting:

> « Bohm-Bawerk does not personify things; for him they have no will of their own, nor their own autonomous movement; he seeks the bases of economic phenomena in men and not in things. And yet - and behind him there is a whole
> 'New' address of the vulgar economy — he is not so far from the fetish worshipers, he has only turned his back on him and has before his eyes another part of the great panorama of capitalist society » 2.

Parvus, however, does more than reiterate the Marxian position When precise:

> «Work is the only 'human' thing in production and from his human point of view man sees in the goods produced the only thing coming from him, they are 'incorporated work'. This is to be understood if it is said that man values the goods produced according to the quantity of work contained in them » 7.
> «The duration of human labor and its quantity are identical concepts... to say it with Marx, labor productivity is the magnitude of economic successes directly proportional to the amount of work» 28.

With this complex essay, which would however deserve special attention, Parvus in any case preceded by twelve years « Hilferding's reply to Böhm-Bawerk, which is the best criticism that exists on the Marxist side of the theory of marginal utility »*. Colletti himself, one of the most lucid scholars of these problems, states that "the real task lies in the stu-

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25 L. COLLETTI, Ideology and society, Rome-Bari 1975, p. 107.

26 PARvus, op. cit., p. 592.

27 Ibidem, p. 555.

28 Ibidem, p. 554.

29 L. COLLeTTI, op. cit., p. 110, n. 84.

Diare because history has taken a different path from the one expected in the Capital. It is likely that anyone who wants to study this fact honestly will have to question some of the same thought of Marx... If Marxists continue to stop at epistemology and epistemology, Marxism is truly dead » 30.

In a note to his historical essay on German social democracy " of 1915 we can find in Parvus this attempt to question Marx as well as Engels, an attempt that he could not carry out further being engaged during the First World War in the much more urgent undertaking of Germany's Re-volutionierungspolitik towards Russia, and which nevertheless Lenin did not fail to point out as an offense to the "sacred

Texts »*, wrote, among other things, Parvus:

> « He [Marx] gives an analysis of the goods, from which he •Ge through the law of value to production and the social conditions behind them. However, the law of value remains unproven. Since this does not come from trade, but from production, it is a social correlation and must make its way through the movement of goods through a million disturbances in which the law itself manifests itself as a disturbance... (F. Engels believed, on the contrary, to have found the purest action of the law of value at the time of the manufacture. It was a misreceipt of the very essence of the law of value as Marx conceied it. I revealed this error in the 18% on the « Neue Zeit »)... K. Marx deduces the law of value in an abstract way; this deduction is speculative and arbitrary... Instead of clarifying first of all the social relations of production, come on
>
> As the conditions of the circulation of goods arise, Marx was about to dissolve the development in which social relations have intertwined in the goods, where all the garments are hidden and the very memory of the social origin is erased. The rap-
>
> Presentation is therefore abstract and complicated and not con-

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30 L. COLLETTI, Political-philosophical interview, Rome-Bari 1975, p. 61.

31 PARVUS, Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie. The Hochburg des Soziali-

Smus, op. cit.

32 V.I. LENIN, Complete Works, Rome, v. 21, pp. 385-86 (« beats on Marx's shoulder, 'correcting' him without a shadow of conscientious criticism and at-

Try. As for a certain Engels, he treats him with open contempt »).

33 Of the same opinion is L. COLLETTI in Ideology and society, cit., p. 109.

> Feels the laymen to gain the liberating feeling of a clear knowledge. So abstract and speculative is the Marxian examination of the law of value, so fresh of life is its subsequent exposure despite the ostic matter » 3.

Moreover, after having understood well that in the III part of Capital "the political economy ends almost completely" 3, Parvus notes that death prevented Marx from dealing with the subject of competition and its consequences, from which

> « a fatalistic trend that runs through the work and caused a lot of trouble. So it is if, instead of entering the house through the open door, you are led by Marx up the roof and into the fireplace. When the narrow and dark passage of the Marxian exposure of value has been overcome, one arrives in wide and bright spaces. But, since you went down through the chimney, you assumed a false point of view and the house appears upside down » 3.

This note concludes, in our opinion of great interest, observing that Marx neglected, since it did not take as a foundation: "production with its social relations", many aspects of capitalist development already then manifested themselves: new production methods and new industries, differentiation of consumption and market, the action of consumption on production, the effects induced by the world market, the rise of new social classes and therefore the extension of consumption, the function of the state, of the municipalities, the new mechanisms of accumulation and distribution, "all things that in Marxian masterpiece are taken little or nothing into consideration" 37

3* PARVUS, op. cit., p. 21 n.

35 Ibidem, p. 22 n.

36 Ibidem, p. 23 n.

37 Ibidem.

ZIP. The

GERMAN MARXISTS AND RUSSIAN MARXISTS

In June 1892, a series of four long articles printed on the front page with the general title Die Lage in Russ-land was published in the "Berliner Vorwarts", a central organ of the Spd. They started from the famine that year in various and large areas of Russia, which had pushed Engels himself to deal with it in a short note that appeared in Italy in "Critica Sociale". The articles of the « Vorwärts » formed a real essay, which analyzed meticulously and in depth not only the agricultural conditions of Russia, but the entire economic dynamics in Russia, in Germany and on the world market. If, moreover, Engels had finished his writing with the words: "But we wait for what will result from it by Russian despotism"*, the columnist of the "Vorwärts", on the contrary,

This is how it started:

> « The whole world observes with an interest like never before the events in the great Russian empire... And the whole world is looking forward to the outcome of the next harvest... if the harvest fails,
>
> [illegible]
> It is the opinion of the simple observerEspecially of the Eu-
> Western ropa... but it contains a lot of fake... it's not true that everything depends on the outcome of the last harvest » 4.

Published as editorials, that is, expressing the opinion of the editorial staff, the articles made a great impression in the circles

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* Die Lage in Russiand, in « Berliner Vorwärts >, Nn. 139, 140, 141, 142

(17-239 F. ENCELS, The famine in Russia, its true causes and its meaning, in "Social Criticism", Milan, N. 7, 1.4.1892.

* Ibidem, p. 102

41 « Berliner Vorwärts », N. 139, 17.6.1892, p. 1.

German socialists and aroused disdain and bewilderment among the Russian populists, who sent a letter of protest to which the newspaper replied.

In fact, they did not find the terms of their problem centered on the peasant commune and the possibility of evading capitalism in the transition to socialism, but a language and a vision entirely lent by Marxism. While correcting

Engels in his conclusion, which seemed to affirm rapid consequences of the famine, disastrous for the regime

Tsarist, the au-

Tore reiterated Engels' thesis that the famine stemmed from an incorrect agrarian reform and the nature of the Russian state and argued that no good harvest would no longer help and the end of peasant Russia was inevitable. Now in the grip of a process of proletarianization, it saw the peasants abandon the lands, whose prices would have collapsed, to provide labor for Russian industry. Protected by duties and favored by huge resources of raw materials, the latter was already able to export. In the second article he argued:

> « In 10/15 years Russia will become a 'flowering' country; It is understood, 'Flourising' in the sense Capitalistic of the term. Large industrial cities of hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, metal and coal mines, a widespread railway network. covering the country, an unprecedented circulation of goods within and to Asia, the countryside with good
>
> Crops,
>
> Well
>
> Built and
>
> Sown, a renewed export of cereals To
>
> Abroad, great wealth, low taxes, masses of Wage earners in the cities and masses of employees from the countryside,
>
> This is more or less the picture of Russia in fifteen Years...» "*

And it was added, according to the Marxist dictates:

> « The land of the peasants will become the property of the capita-Ready; the farmer, an employee. In place of the small peasant economy, the large capitalist enterprise takes over. The emancipatory work of the sixties has
>
> Made of the Russia is a commodity-producing country; now it follows the transition from simple merchant production to complex capitalist production. This means the collapse of Russia... Capitalism triumphs, but in its triumph is also

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42 Ibidem, N. 140, 18.6.1892, p. 2.

> Its ruin, because the organization of the working class will proceed faster than its development... It now enters as a new link in the great powerful chain of united proletarians from all over the world... and perhaps at the very moment when Russian capitalism reaches its peak, the
> The power of international capitalism and its own power will already be undermined at the base!..» 4.

The analysis was later specified in detail, it differentiated itself, touching the sore points, developing the most important themes: the economic crisis, the devaluation of the ruble, the need for the tsarist regime to lean on a class that could no longer be the peasant now in disintegration, nor the still inconsistent petty bourgeoisie, but only the holders of land capital and industrial capital, who in Russia, unlike Europe, went arm in arm. And the author continued, explaining that for agriculture a mechanization was necessary, which could now be addressed in the current degree of Russian industrial development. As for the democratization of the country, neither the bourgeoisie nor the petty bourgeoisie had a real interest, but only the proletariat, for which "freedom is not a mere 'ideological' requirement'*, but a "social necessity"* "to be able to organize itself"*, so that "the working class will one day democratize the Russian Constitution"*.

In the fourth article, the "consequences" were examined
Ze for Europe », and this was his title.

> « Since a national loan in Russia is no longer possible, Russia must resort to a foreign loan. Except for the three industrial states that, the only ones, can be considered for a loan: England, France, Germany,
> There is not a single one who has an interest in strengthening Russian power, since Russia is the true political and economic enemy of the whole of Europe*. But Germany and France threaten and fear each other* and seek

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43 Ibidem.

* Ibidem, No. 131, p. 2.

* Ibidem.

4 Ibidem.

47 Ibidem.

46 Ibidem, N. 142, 21.6.1892 (IV. Follow for Europe).

4 Ibidem.

Each to earn the support of Russia 50... They don't see the danger (or don't want to see it!) That aside
Of Russia grows against all together; they only see the danger that arises for each if Russia allies itself with the other 51... So Russia can hope for a French or German loan, but Russia's economic crisis will have more serious consequences for Europe » 52.

That Russia that "rightfully could be called the
Nurse of Europe », now comes to lack. i

And what does this mean for Europe that all, except the Austria, « has been living for a long time in a shortage of cereals » 53, « whose consumption, moreover, grows from year to year? 5. It will be able to import « only from the United States, East Indies and possibly Australia » ss. « It is therefore clear that, in such circumstances, for the next few years a great increase in the gra-
No »$. « The cost of labor must rise, because the cost of its maintenance increases» 57, « At the same time

America thrives following the unprecedented dimensions

As-

Sunte from the export of cereals. While European capital is weakened, what is already its sworn enemy today
si It will strengthen. And, while this happens,
Grows in Russia a
New powerful industrial state, advancing rival on the world market » 58.

It was perhaps the first time that such a Marxist investigation was established on the economic-political situation of Russia in the European and world context, given that Plechanov mainly dealt with political theory and philosophy and only two years later Struve's important book on the economic development of Russia was published. Lenin still didn't exist. It was clear

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50 Ibidem.
51 Ibidem.
52 Ibidem.
53 Ibidem.
4 Ibidem.
55 Ibidem, p. 2.
5 Ibidem.
57 Ibidem.
55 Ibidem.
59 P. STRUve, Kritičeskie zametki k voprosu ob ekonomiceskom razvitii Rossii (Critical observations on the economic development of Russia), Saint Peterburg 1894.

That in the person who had written that series of articles there was a connoisseur of Russia and, clearly, a Marxist.

This made a particular impression in Germany, where so far nothing like this had ever been read on the Russian side, only the revolutionary theories of the populists were also known on the SPD press, and the same party, except for some leaders such as Bebel, Liebknecht, Kautsky, even ignored the core of the future Posdr: the Emancipation of work group directed by Plechanov in Geneva. Even in his conclusions, however, the author placed himself on an even higher and more mature political level:

> «In front of the working class is a difficult task. Here, as everywhere, the strength of the workers lies only in the organization. But not only in the organization Trade union, but in the trade union and political organization together! Since, where it is no longer a fight against individual capitalists or individual capitalist groups, but the general struggle of the working class against the class of capitalists, the workers must implement their political strength together with the economic one... What it cannot achieve as an economic force in struggle with the capitalists, it achieves as a political force through the state, through legislation.

These articles thus revealed to the Germans that there were Russian Marxists (only Kautsky with a few others knew something about it and could be aware of the identity of the author, whom he had met in Stoocarda in 1891 and introduced into party journalism); to the Russian Marxist emigrants such as Ple-chanov, Axelrod, who were not the only ones, who had no less prepared and mature companions of ideas; to the populists, who had ceased their monopoly on the Spd press as representatives of revolutionary Russia. If Engels" and Plecha-nov ", writing on the occasion of the famine in Russia, had focused on its immediate effects, the essayist of the "Vor-wärts" had started from it for a deeper and more extensive investigation, in which, beyond the finding of the weight that

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60 « Berliner Vorwärts», N. 142, p. 2.

61 F. Engels, op. cit.

62 G.V. PLECHANOv, O zadačach socialistov v bor'be s golodom v Rossii.

By now

Had assumed capitalism in Russia and the end of the old agrarian economy, two moments were expected that represented and will continue for a long time to represent a novelty in the Marxist debate and also outside of it:

1) the weakness of the Russian petty bourgeoisie as a social layer capable of giving life to a democratic political force, whether socialist or liberal; 2) the outline of two new great industrial powers, the USA and Russia, which are in antagonism to Europe, contend for its supremacy so far, will condition world history. These theses, as Z.A. Zeman and W.B. Scharlau® have already observed, will remain fixed points of the author's political thought and, especially the first, will constitute the starting point of his theory of the "permanent revolution".

At the given moment, that is, the summer of 1892, the writing in question had a decisive importance in the relations between the Spd and the German Marxists on the one hand and the Russian Marxists on the other.

The latter were represented substantially only by Plechanov with Axelrod and Zasulič, they had contacts with En-gels and Bernstein in London, but were practically ignored by the direction of the Spd and its organ « Berliner Vorwärts » directed by Liebknecht. As the curators of Perepiska write

G.V. Plechanova and P. B. Aksel'roda, was "a gloomy period in the life of the group "Emancipation of work", when the latter did not have its own organ and could express itself very little and rarely in the press"*. With Bebel, with Liebknecht, with Engels himself they had more frequent and active relationships the populists narodovol'cy s N.S. Rusanov and P.L. Lavrov.

They were invited to write about the "Vorwärts" of Russia and its revolutionary movement and they did it about twice a

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D3 A. ZEMAN - W. B. SCHARLAU, The Merchant of Revolution, The Life of A.I. Helphand (1867-1924), London 1965. W.B.SCHARLAU-Z.A. ZEMAN, Der Freibeuter der Revolution: Parvus-Helphand. A political biography,

Cologne 1964, p. 34. [They are two similar books, but not identical.]

6 Perepiska G.V. Plechanova i P.B. Aksel'roda [G.V. Plecha-

Nov-P.B. Axelrod], Moskva 1925; now « Russian Reprint Series. LIV », The Hague 1967, p. 230. From now on mentioned here as Perepiska P-A.

65 That is, belonging to the "Narodnaia Volja". O

Month signing respectively with the pseudonyms of N. Sergeevskij and St. Petrov. The series of articles Die Lage in Russland, which appeared anonymously in June, alerted them. In July they published again in the « Vorwärts » an article in which the populist conception of the revolution was exposed, but in September the Spd organ came out with the unsigned editorial Die Sozialdemokratie in Russland", which affirmed the presence of Marxist socialist forces in Russia and their natural affinity with the German party. A letter to Axelrod by the author, signed I.H., claimed the authorship of the editorial and « the merit of having first place on the 'Vorwärts' in a Marxist way the problem of Russian intelligence » 68. According to Russian usage, and with the particular emphasis that Parvus also later gave to indicate the detachment from the people of Marxist exponents from Plechanov to Lenin and Trockij, the term was extensive to politicians. The writing pointed out to the German "comrades" that the peasant ideology of the Narodniki could not be a promoter of revolution in Russia, that the working class was already active thanks to the Marxists, that the Spd could not but ignore this "historical fact" and had to give them its support.

This was decisive for a total change of course of the SPD towards the Russian revolutionary movement: it allowed Plechanov for the first time to have access to the "Vorwärts" and paved the way for the official contacts of the following December between the SPD and the Emancipation of Labor group. The same populists in a certain sense facilitated the matter by reacting badly from the beginning: creating a big mess and lowering themselves to a controversy that nacked him, making Bernstein and Engels also rise against them. It all started with the fact that Rusa-nov, in the context of the dispute between his and Lavrov's populist group and Plechanov's Marxist group for the recognition of being the true representatives of revolutionary Russia, tried to combine a meeting between them at Engels with the assistance of a Spd exponent. The latter, who was supposed to be Bebel, however did not show up, as Plechanov did not introduce himself,

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66 « Berliner Vorwärts », 19.7.1892.

67 Ibidem, 23.9.1892.

68 Perepiska P-A, cit., t. I, p. 231.

And went to London to Engels the only Rusanov. Although the meeting had failed, Engels received him and politely spoke with him, praising "the truly socialist activity of Plechanov and his friends" in contrast to the "political romanticism" of the populists. Since Rusanov insisted on these positions, En-gels told him that they Russians did not understand political economy, that "the gear wheel of capitalism was already biting hard in the Russian economy", that they were intestered with "archaic ideas".

Finally, he advised him to read an article by Sergeevskij on the « Vorwärts », who « says what I say. Haven't you read his articles »? To which Rusanov replied that Sergeevskij was himself, that it was his own pseudonym. Engels laughed, saying "who will ever understand you Russians, you must have compartments in your brains", and hoping anyway "the alliance of the narodovol'cy and the Marxists... against hunger and government" 6. But he didn't have to get a big opinion of the seriousness of his visitor after the ambivalence he had revealed and the mess of the missed meeting. The episode, moreover, reveals the conflict between Russian revolutionaries in exile and the uncertainty of German Marxists in the face of those diatribes and confusion of ideas.

This turned out even more when, as a reaction to the writings of I. H. (Israel Helphand, or Parvus) and especially to the one on social democracy in Russia in the organ of the Spd, a denigrating attack appeared on the periodical « Frei Russland »™, which was an emanation of the London organ « Free Russia » of the revolutionary populists, directed by S.M. Kravčinskij, who under the pseudonym of Stepnjak was also a writer of some notoriety in the West and also translated into Italy. It could be read among other things:

"As far as Russian social democracy is concerned, considering the extent of its influence on Russia's internal development, we could be concise: it is an influential entity. One or two handfuls of so-called "s-d" Russians, one

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69 Cfr. No. RusAnov, Comment j'ai fait la connaissance d'Engels, in

Souvenirs sur Marx et Engels, Moscou, s.d., pp. 337-343, from whose text the words attributed to Engels were also taken.
0 W. ANDERFUHREN, Eine Auseinandersetzung in « Frei Russland», September 1892.

Row of old spinsters... and some students...»". Kravžinskij himself was disdaned by it, published a declaration of apology in the "Free Russia" and closed the German edition. In fact, he was not directly responsible for the attack, but this attack, which had goof-famente wanted to rest up Parvus' article, seemed so offensive not only to Axelrod and Plechanov, but also to Eduard Bernstein, whom the latter wrote to Axelrod on 15-11-1892 to answer in some way on the German press: « ... In the meantime appeared the « Frei Russland » with the article of W.A. against you and I showed it to Uncle " as an example of the intrigues that are made against you and how your opinions are deformed... By the way, it occurs to me that the article of the « Frei Russland » is an excellent excuse for you to expose your point of view or your tactics » ". The curators of the aforementioned Perepiska P-A write: "Plechanov used this pretext to publish his open letter to W. Liebknecht: it was his first intervention on the 'Vorwärts', where until then the narodovol'cy had almost the monopoly of the Russian revolutionaries...» *.

Written on November 24, the letter was published on December 1'8. " After that, the social democrats became the main interlocutors of the Spd and Plechanov himself entered into collaborative relations with Kautsky and the "Neue Zeit". His epistolary relations with Engels began with a letter of 25-3-1893, whom he had met in London in 1889 without then following an epistolary exchange, Engels being mainly in contact with the populists. In that first letter Plechanov among other things wrote:

> «Now I'm preparing a series of articles (for the Neue Zeit') On Holbach, Helvétius and Marx... They told me, that she He wrote some benevolent words about my article on Hegel...» %.

And he wrote to Axelrod: « .. I wrote to

"1 Cit. from Perepiska P-A, op. cit., p. 231.

72 This is how Engels was called among the intimates.

73 Ibidem, p. 232, 239.

74 Ibidem, p. 232.

75 It is also reproduced (in Russian) in Perepiska P-A, pp. 232-37.

16 Perepiska K. Marksa i F. Engel'sa s russkimi političeskimi dejate-ljami [Carting of K. Marx and F. Engels with Russian politicians], Moskva 1947, pp. 265-66 (177. G.C. Plechanov in Engels, 25.3.1893). From now on mentioned by us as Perepiska M-E-RPD.

> Kautsky, with whom I now have great literary business (a book on Saint-Simon), a biography of Saint-Simon, Louis Blanc
>
> And Cernyševskij...»».

Until May 1894 he would ignore who that I.H. was, who then also signed Unus, Ignatieff and in other ways, who, with his articles on "Vorwärts", with his personal knowledge of Kautsky, Zetkin, Liebknecht and others, had played such a decisive part that he first and the Russian Marxists generally came into contact with the German Marxists and the Spd, saw the doors of his press opened and were recognized as the Russian revolutionary comrades instead of the populists. Plechanov had read those articles and others, which had interested and intrigued him a lot, but, perhaps out of discretion or conspirary habit, he had never been curious to know who the author really was. Almost certainly believing that he was a German, he asked Engels in 1894, who replied:

> «Ignatieff, as Kautsky tells me, is the pseudonym of Helphand (or something like that), which is now in Stuttgart. You probably know him. However, not having the authorization of Kautsky to use this communication, please consider it strictly confidential » 73.

Plechanov, in fact, had known him at least before 91, when Helphand was a student in Switzerland, a friend of Rosa Luxem-burg, J. Marchlewski, Leo Jogiches and M. Warszawski. As Helphand will write (whose Plechanov always insisted on crippleing the surname in Gell'font)»:

> « In those years G. V. met me once. Plechanov And he asked me: 'Will he write about Belinsky?'. But then I I dealt with the problems of workers' legislation, of the mono State, etc. So I pointed out to him how his exhortation was in contrast with what interested me. 'Too bad,

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" Perepiska P-A, P. 83 (G.V. Plechanov to P.B. Axelrod, Jan-Feb. 1893).

78 Perepiska M-E-RPD, cit., p. 269. It's curious that W. Scharlau in the book cited here (n. 63) you exchange the answer of Engels to Plechanov for one of Ple-chanov to Engels.

See Perepiska P-A, p. 119, n. 12.

> - he replied, - do you know what I'm telling you? Above all, he must venerate the literature of his homeland'» 80.

Plechanov had forgotten about that Russian student who

He did not want to deal with literary criticism, but in a few years Helphand, although hunted in Berlin by the Prussian police (and for this reason the pseudonyms always different) and then expelled, had written in his perfect German things of great importance, and appearing as one of the most acute young Marxist authors, he had also determined that decisive turn for which Russian Marxism flanked the Todesque one in the European theoretical and political debate.

And so he first, Plechanov, thanks to this he came out of his isolation.

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8 PARvUs, In Kampf um die Wahrheit, Berlin 1918, p. 7.

ZIP. IV

THE FIRST THEORIZATION OF THE MASS POLITICAL STRIKE

The beginning of the discussion on this topic of great weight in the history and theory of the European revolutionary movement is usually attributed to 1906, that is, after the Russian Revolution, and the most important developments and contributions are placed in the period from that year until almost the eve of the First World War, identifying in Rosa Luxemburg and Anton Pannekoek the figures, although in disagreement with each other, of this conception as a tool for the revolution. Scouring through the vast literature on the subject we read in F.L. Carsten:

« Rosa Luxemburg... commented vigorously on the Russian revolution of 1905 in which you discovered a new weapon of primary importance, the mass political strike, which she tried to transfer to Germany ». Oskar Negt, the most authoritative biographer of Luxem-burg, writes: « As you know, Rosa Luxemburg has acquired from Russia almost all the concrete ideas about the mass strike...» ®

The latter published the booklet Massenstreik, Partei und Gewerkschaften® in 1906, while Pannekoek followed in 1911 with Massenaktion und Revolution 3. Even before, however, as M.L. Salvadori observes, "A place of considerable importance in the debate on the mass strike and the Russian revolution was acquired by the Dutch Henriette Roland-Holst, author of the book... General strike and

Sozialdemokratie, appeared in June 1905... In conclusion, Roland-Holst came to state that the political strike

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81 F.L. CARSTEN, Freedom and revolution: Rosa Luxemburg in: L. LABEDZ, Revisionism (trans. of Revisionism, London 1962), Milan 1967, p. 79.

82 O. NEGT, Rosa Luxemburg and the renewal of Marxism in: History of Marxism, v. II, Turin 1979, p. 329.

70 83 Collected Works, vol. II, Berlin 1974.

84 In « Neue Zeit », 1911-12.

Russian-style had profoundly changed the perspective that had first been perceived in the West about the purposes of this weapon. What Russia had shown was that the mass political strike was the sharpest weapon of struggle that the Western proletariat itself had to oppose, 'In the decisive hours, to the state's power apparatus' » 8. It must be said, however, that the problem of the mass political strike dates back at least to 1893, when, at the X commission of the International Socialist Congress in Zurich, Kautsky had presented a proposal in which, among other things, it was said: "The mass strike in certain circumstances can be a very effective tool not only of economic struggle, but also of political struggle" and Bernstein had subsequently published his writing

The strike as a political means of struggle. These pronouncements, however, were still part of the intense and heated debate about the party and trade unions, which took place in Germany in the twenty years at the turn of the century.

It is instead Parvus who in 1895-96 posed the question of the mass political strike on a completely different level: on the one hand, linking to the famous so-called "will of Engels", according to which the proletariat could no longer return to the old revolution on the barricades and possessed much better revolutionary means" and "we, the revolutionaries, the subversive, prosper much better with legal means than with illegal means and with the riot"; on the other hand, outlining that approach of the mass political strike as a revolutionary tool - both in a defensive and offensive sense -, which, already then fully argued and developed, will be further defined by him in the writings of 1904. It is this approach that, in controversy with Plechanov and also with Lenin, finding the consent of the young Trotsky, affects the course of the Russian revolution of the

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85 M.L. SALVADORI, German Social Democracy and the Russian Revolution of 1905. The debate on the mass strike and the "differences" between East and West in History of Marxism, v. II, cit., pp. 572-574.

65 For both cit. cf.: E. BERNSTEIN, Der Strike als politisches Kampfesmittel, in « Neue Zeit » 1893-94, B.I.

87 F. Engels, Introduction to the first reprint of Class Lotte in France by Marx, in: K. MARx-F. EnGELs, 1848 in Germany and France, Rome 1946, pp. 121-42; published for the first time in passages on the « Vor-

Wärts » of 1895.

1905 and by Parvus himself together with Trotsky is translated into Russia itself, through the soviet of which the most lucid leaders were, in practice: in political tactics. From there, of rebound, this conception returned to Germany and determined the debate to which we mentioned above.

Parvus' essay was entitled Coup d'état and mass political strike and appeared in the "Neue Zeit" and, successively, in two other reprints: a German and a Russian one personally edited by the author". This essay seems to have been forgotten by Marxist historiography. As far as we know, he underlined in 1962 its importance and anticipatory character only

The first scholar of Parvus, Z.A. Zeman. Referring to the aforementioned written by Engels, Zeman writes:

> « Although Engels had indicated that in certain cases, such as, for example, a violation of the Constitution, the contract between the prince and the people could be suspended, and the social democrats therefore felt free to choose their own means of defense, no one in the party had very clear ideas about what these means should be... Helphand tried to answer this problem precisely." « .Helphand's penetrating analysis marked an important step forward in the ideology of the revolution. The German social democrats leaned towards a revolutionary fatalism; Helphand, the 1st foreigner in their ranks, was one of the few to think - in that time of deep peace and prosperity - about the technical side of the revolution. He opposed the growing power of the state to the growing power of the workers and examined the possibility of a showdown. One could discern in his recommendation for a self-government of the workers the figure of the Petersburg soviet in 1905»89.

It is therefore worth seeing more closely some extrinsic and intrinsic moments of the written one, which mark its absolute novelty in the era in which it appeared, the subsequent projections and therefore the

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88: PARVUS, Staatsstreich und politischer Massenstreik, in « Neue Zeit », 1895-96, B. II; Ed. sing. with the title: Wohin leads the political MassLung der Sozialdemokratie?, Dresden 1897; Russian ed.: Gosudarstvennyi perevorot i političeskaja massovaja stačka in: V rjadach germanskoj socialdemokratiii, Sankt Peterburg 1906, Pp. 174-222. From now on referred to as VRGS. Our quotes refer to the Dresden edition.

89 Z.A. ZEMAN, From the Communist Manifesto to the declaration of the 8l in Revisionism, cit., Pp. 142-143.

Its inescapable importance. It immediately had a strong echo at the

Socialist Congress in London in 1896, which Parvus himself attended. The Russian social-revolutionaries on their organ had responded by reiterating their theses and therefore had not been admitted to the sessions, including that Ch. Rappoport, who will one day be among the founders of the French PC. Not only that: the congress had decided that those who resorted to terrorism could not be part of the Socialist International. But the importance of that essay by Parvus went far beyond this provisional merit: it was only the beginning of that series of his writings that, at the international level, gave a first answer to Engels' so-called "political testament" about the sunset of the old barricade tactics and to the general question of the tactics that now had to be followed, outlining, even before Bernstein pronounced on this merit, also a contestation, completely opposite to his, of the theory of the automatic collapse of capitalism.

The rumors circulating in Germany about the threat of a reactionary coup, intended among other things to abolish universal suffrage, updated those questions. Faced with such a danger, could the "intelligent use" of suffrage, made by the party and praised by Engels, be enough? Not, certainly, if suffrage was abolished by the generals. And, on the other hand, could you make barricades against a modern army? Neither, and the same

Engels said it. Parvus wrote in the « Introduction »:

> « Following this, we have set ourselves the task of calmly examining what the actual state of affairs is, if The reaction can go far, what results it can lead to, and what means the working class has in hand to reject the reaction. But soon it appeared, that in This struggle is not only about the working class, but in general about the defense of political freedom; that the political reaction, which began during the fight against social democracy, must lead as its final consequence to the Creation of a powerful general protest movement, against which it will inevitably break down.

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9 Cfr. V ZILLI, The Russian Revolution of 1905. The formation of political parties (1881-1904), Naples 1963, p. 614; and also Perepiska P-A, cit. t. I. Pp. 159-60.

Concluding these introductory lines, he explicitly stated the intention to counter those interpretations of Engels' last writing that already began to circulate in 1895 and were intended to deny the revolutionary perspective. Par-

This is how it was expressed:

> «In the present study we often refer to F. Engels. That in itself would need no explanation. But there was
> Another one and
>
> Special reason: Engels' last thoughts
> On the tactics of the labor movement, exposed in the introduction to the new edition of Le struggles di classe in Francia by Karl
>
> Marx have been misunderstood by many ».

The essay then developed into fourteen respective chapters-Vamente entitled:

> « 1. The new course; 2. The abolition of universal suffrage; 3. The police war against social democracy;
> 4. Constitutionalism or absolutism; 5. The coup d'état, the Militarism, the agrarian; 6. The fear of social revolution;
> 7. The revolution on the barricades; 8. The mandatory military service; 9. The discipline; 10. The people and the army in the event of a coup d'état; 11. The organization of passive resistance;
> 12. The mass political strike; 13. The disorganization of the state; 14. A warning!».

The titles of the chapters correspond to as many themes examined and are systematically carried out in its flat and brilliant style with frequent use of examples and images with-

Crete. Therefore, starting from the last Engels and almost veiledly making a corrective to it even before rincing those who misundered it, Parvus writes:

> «Already in the 1940s the tactical preponderance in a street fight was on the side of the military, so it would be blind madness, given the extremely refined weapons technique of our times, to want to risk even a resistance by force against the military... On the other hand, the essence of the political revolution does not consist at all in a battle over the barricades, but also has other expressions, which as a whole can be designated as a disorganization of society. The question arises whether a coup can not also result in a general disorganization and to what extent this can prove effective.

Parvus hypothesizes a situation in which the working class and democracy must face a threat of a military coup, in defense of legality against arbitrariness. In his intentions, however, the writing had to have a double reading: it could also be understood as a doctrine for the seizure of power. A chapter is dedicated to the analysis of a modern army, which is not only composed of reactionary officers, but of soldiers who come from the people and also from the proletariat. Anticipatory observation, which will be put to good use for their own intentions by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Then there is the whole masterful chapter on the "mass political strike", as he defines it so that there is no confusion with the "general strike" theorized by revolutionary trade unionism, to which he opposes a whole series of arguments here.

> “The general strike is not a panacea. Isolated from political connections it is ineffective and can lead the working class to succumb... The mass political strike in This differs From others, that his end is not the rag- The achievement of better working conditions, but the achievement of precise political changes; which for this reason it is not addressed towards individual capitalists, but against the government. But how can such a strike hit the government? It strikes him because it upsets the economic order of society ».

A preliminary and indispensable condition is "the organization of the working class" — he writes to emphasize his disagreement with trade unionism. And also: "It is difficult to support a large mass strike for a long time, but it is even more difficult for the government to resist in the face of a situation of general political movement of protest". And conolude:

> « We have shown what the coup d'état means: the collapse of the empire and the disorganization of the state.
>
> And what does the mass political strike mean, which inevitably sooner or later is the response to a coup d'état. Well, it means the conquest of political power by the proletariat! Since this is after all true: only the proletariat with class consciousness and able to defend political freedom, the political Constitution against violence. And if the violence of a government that violates the Constitution were broken, it is only the proletariat that would hold the battlefield and assume the political leadership.

Finally, it seems important to us to note that passage of the chapter on the disorganization of the government, which, when read today, takes on the real value of prophecy. If they can be important

Strikes by miners or other categories of the industry, writes Parvus

> « The center of gravity, especially in the event of a political strike, is in the media. When the huge media stop working, you
>
> The entire productive social mechanism and, with it, also the political mechanism. When the workers of the railway workshops, the employees of the stations, the workers of the other sectors of the railways cease to serve; when the clerks of the post, the telegraphs and telephones do the same, the government is disorganized; as if bleeding, it struggles in powerless convulsions ».

Almost a hundred years have passed since these lines and contemporary society proves to be all the more dependent on its much more complex and sophisticated communications system. But even then for Parvus, communications were the nerve center of industrial society, its vulnerable point. He had also grasped the line of development here and this element too will be cardinal to the "theory of the permanent revolution" and, all the more so, ten years later by him underlined in the Russian revolution of 1905. The latter had been foreseen by him in the famous series of articles War and Revolution published on the "Iskra" from February 1904 to January 1905. In them, as in the following articles "'', in the Letter to Lenin and in the preface to January 9 by Trotsky, he further developed the concepts of his aforementioned essay Staatsstreich und politischer Massenstreik for the definition of the "permanent revolution" later assumed by Trotsky himself. But the origins of that theory are not, as it was written, in 1904-05, but, as already seen (supra, in cap. III) and in this, and we will see again, they date back to the

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[21] PARVUS, Vojna i revoljucija, in « Iskra», Nn. 59 (10.2.1904), 61 (5.3. 1904), 79 (1.12.1904), 82 (1.1.1905); Posle vojny [After the war], ibidem, No. 85 (27.1.1905); Itogi i perspektivy, ibidem; Posle vojny, II, ibidem, suppl. No. 112 (10.10.1905); the same, together with Pis'mo k Leninu and other writings that touch on the subject, are found in: PaRvus, Rossija i revoljucija, Sankt Peterburg 1906, hereinafter referred to as RIR.

Meditation started at least in 1892 and conducted assiduously and currently until 1906-07. As well as in the Russian press, as M.L. Salvadori notes:

> «On the German social democratic press he wrote some important essays... he theorized, long before the outbreak of the revolution in Russia and therefore of the 'lessons' provided by the great Russian mass movements, that the general strike It represented the specific form With which he was destined to Open the proletarian revolutionary process » 22 .

Parvus, however, never showed off the term "permanent revolution", which, in its Revolution in Per-manenz variant, dated back to the times of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" and was put back into circulation by L. Martov first, followed by Mehring and Lenin on the occasion of the Russian revolution of 1905 93

To end with regard to Parvus' essay here in the subject, it is necessary to remember, in addition to his general theoretical implications mentioned here, that in it the same political tactic implemented during the 1905 revolution using its lesson in an offensive sense was first expressed, while in a defensive sense, according to the letter of the text, the social democratic tactic that made the Kapp-Putsch of March 1920 in Berlin failed, when Parvus was Ebert's secret advisor, was applied. J.M. Keynes considered the fact of such great interest that he wanted to underline it in his book A Revision of the Treaty*-Not least a reason for attention for that essay we see in the fact that it had already highlighted in 1896 in that passage we mentioned in chapter. I) " the value and importance of semantics for politics, a conception that would receive theorization and development only many decades later.

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92 M.S. SALVADORI, op. cit., pp. 581-82. It mentions, among other things: PARvUS, Über den Generalstreik, « Leipziger Volkszeitung », 23.8.1904.

93 L. MARtov, Na očeredi. Rabočaja partija i « zachvat vlasti », kak naša bližajšaja zadača; «Iskra», N. 93, March 1905; F. MEHRING, Die Revolution in Permanenz, « Neue Zeit», N. No. B. B. 1905/06, pp. pp. V. I. LENIN, PSS, t. II, Moskva 1960, p. 222.

94 J.M. KEYNES, Revision of the Peace Contracts, Munich-Leipzig 1922, P. 13 (ed. ted.).

95 Cfr. cap. I, pp. 20-21.

ZIP. V

WORLD MARKET AND SOCIALIST POLITICS

At the end of 1896 those articles of E. Bernstein on « problems Of socialism» * , that they would have Had to mark a historic turning point in the evolution of socialist and Marxist doctrine, give rise to a debate that was fierce for decades, and still not extinguished today, split the movement in two, giving rise to the so-called "revisionism". Bernstein had been close to Engels for years until his death, and, after that, he presented himself as one of the most authoritative theorists, a saint of Marxism together with Bebel and Kautsky. The latter, on the contrary, judged the articles of his friend « Ede » as « extremely nice »*, while the «Vorwärts » of Berlin and the « Leipziger Volkszeitung » welcomed them as « stimulating observations ». It was about something else: a questioning of the very validity of Marxism as an economic theory and revolutionary theory, of its scientificity, of its applicability already on the eve of the 20th century. The Zusammen-bruchstheorie, or "theory of collapse", which had the tax to derive from it, or the theory that capitalism by itself generated in itself the contradictions and forces that would inevitably have made it collapse, is in the air, Bernstein said. Capitalism, he added, is more vital today than ever and will continue to be so: it is useless to wait for its collapse, which will not come and even less by itself, but it is necessary to adapt to its development, to fight for better conditions for workers; also march towards socialism, yes, not however because it is a necessity that descends from economic laws, but because it can be a more just and more humane society, whose legitimacy

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9 E. BERNSTEIN, Problem of Socialism. Eigenes und Ubersetzes, « Neue Zeit », 1896/97, B.1 and B.2.
57 F. MEINER, Die Volkswirtschaftlehre der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen, Leipzig 1924, p. 19.d

However, it is not scientific as Marxism claims, but ethical. - What was the explosive potential and how many delayed burst mines of Bernstein's thought was then immediately understood only by Parvus. And it is sensed why: he too - in this only with Bernstein, although on the opposite bank - aware of the dead end in which the movement and its theory were located, had been looking for years for the way out in the revolutionary direction. The way out proposed with full legitimacy and well-foundedness by Bernstein was instead: adaptation to capitalist development. Something similar to what, even in backward Russia, Struve, Tugan-Bara-novskij and others had claimed for other reasons since '94, later all called "economoms" for this same reason with a term that was derogatory for the revolutionaries.

And behold, from the pages of his newspaper, Parvus first opened a machine gun fire against Bernstein's theses in 1898. It is an organic series of articles with the general title: The Bernstein revolution of socialism, developed in ten issues of the newspaper%, signed first "Pv", then "Parvus". After the article Social Revolution and Colonial Policy", published already on January 27, on February 9 he accompanied by a polemical comment entitled A Clarification by E. Bernstein 10° the reprint of an article by Bernstein on the "Vorwärts". Then, on March 9, he wrote The Overturning by E. Bernstein "1 and again the mischievous article E. Bernstein as poor Tom 102

According to Parvus, Bernstein's approach meant the "destruction of socialism", his doubts about the collapse of capitalism were simply proof of his inability to think scientifically; his statistical data, "rough material" poorly processed; anyone who was able to think, could see that the revolution was "a productive necessity". This expression is of great interest, which indicates in Parvus the first revolutionary who compared the adjective "productive" to the concept of revolution, which therefore saw the latter as

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98 PV and PARVUS, E. Bernstein Umwälzung des Sozialismus, « Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung », 28.1 -6.3.1898 (Nn. 22, 25, 30, 31, 35, 40, 43, 45, 47, 54).

99 PARVUS, Social Revolution and Colonial Policy, Ibidem, 27.1.1898.

100 PARVUS, Eine Erklärung E. Bernstein, ibidem, 9.2.1898.

101 PARVUS, Ed. Bernstein Herumwälzung, ibidem, 9.3.1898.

102 PARvus, Ed. Bernstein as armer Toms, ibidem, 11.3 and 24.3.1898.

A constructive fact, and not only destructive of the old order.

This will be a constant element of the Parvusian conception even in the face of the Russian revolution, and polarly opposed to the Leninian conception of the seizure of power et apres on verra!

At the Stuttgart congress of the SPD in the same year, Par-vus had the Dresden organization present a motion according to which the class character of the existing state could not be overcome with reforms, but only through a revolution. The congress rejected Bern-stein's theses as opportunists, but without condemning him: recommending him to meditate on his ideas and to resubmit them reworked in the form of an essay, while Parvus was opposed to a total closure 108.

If already in Staatsstreich und politischer Massenstreik, as seen in the previous chapter, there was the refutation of the political tactic that would take its name from Bern-Steinian revisionism, the latter was for the first time addressed in its thematic range by the aforementioned writings of Parvus. The article by Plechanov Io4, that of Kautsky 1st and the famous essay by Luxemburg 106 would have followed. Since, however, the Bernstein debate continued and expanded, Parvus dealt with it again with fundamental essays that went beyond it 107. They came out after Bernstein had fully published his theory in the book The Assuppositions of Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy 's. In the essay on the "agricultural misery of Russia" 10 Parvus instead summarized the events of agriculture

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103 Protokoll des Partietages in Stuttgart, 1898, p. 70 sgg., 95-130.

104 G. PLECHANoV, Bernstein und der Materialismus, « Neue Zeit » 1897-98, B.2, Pp. 545-555

105 K. KAUTSKY, Bernstein and the Social Democratic Program, Stuttgart 1899.

106 R. LUXEMBOURG Soziareform or Revolution, Leipzig 1899. It.: Re-Social form or revolution?, Rome 1973 (with prefix of L. Basso).

107 PARVUS, Der Opportunismus in der Praxis, « Neue Zeit», 1900-901, B.2; also in VRGS, pp. 233-360; Die Industriezölle und der Weltmarkt, ibidem, B.1, 1900.901; Handeiskrisis und Gewerkschaften, Munich 1901; Also in VRGS, pp. 84-138

108 E. BERNSTEIN, Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die AufgaBen der Sozialdemokratie, Stuttgart 1849.

109 PARVUS, The Russian Agricultural Elend, « New Time», 1900/901, B.1.

And the Russian economy after the Crimean war, after the four volumes of analysis by Tengoborski 1° and the famous book by Haxthau-sen ''. Segul another writing which, although succinct and statistical, was revealing on the "financial situation of Russia" ''?. Lenin reviewed it in the No. 1 of the magazine « Zarja », calling the author a great expert on finance. At the same time he published that theoretical essay of his that, dealing with "commercial policy and doctrine" ''', once again had to say a new and anticipatory word in the interpretation of Marxism. The ar-gomento burned because, on the one hand, one should not be confused with Bernstein's revisionism, but, on the other hand, it was no longer possible to follow the tride of mechanically repeating the formulas of Marx and Engels. « It is therefore

·- he wrote - in a sense of a 'revision of concepts.

We, 'Orthodoxist Marxists', have absolutely nothing with such reviews as long as we don't ask ourselves to have the purpose of throwing away from the head everything we have learned.. "'. Therefore, no renunciation of the "proletarian class struggle", the "spiritual formation of socialism" and Marxism. Which - and Parvus is the first to underline this definition - is a method, and not a doctrine, not a conception of the world, not an ideology, etc., all interpretations on which today, a century later, is still discussed: "The political theory is only a method, complicated but certainly also fundamental, to solve practical problems". « I start - he writes - with a brief characterization of the capitalist doctrine of free trade and the criticism exercised towards it by the capitalist theory of customs protection from

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119 L.W. TENGOBORSKI, Studies on the productive forces of Russia, Paris 1852-55.

19. 111 A.F. HAXTHAUSEN, Studies on the internal conditions, the people's law and in particular the rural areas of Russia, Hannover 1847-52.

*•112 PARVUS, Die gegenwartige Finanzlage in Russland, « Neue Zeit», 1900-901, B.1.

113 PARVUS, Die Handelspolitik und die Doktrin, « Neue Zeit», 1900/ 1901, B.1.

114 Op. cit., p. 580.

." :H5 Ibidem.

116 Ibidem.

On the one hand and, on the other, from scientific socialism "'™. And he continues by recalling both the criticisms and the famous position taken by Marx in his Brussels speech in 1848 on commercial policy, which, he will notice later, represented the maximum point reached by Marxism in this regard: "Engels even after his acquaintance with Marx has always stayed away from pure political economy. His work, so rich in historical aspects, and also so clear and confident in his examination of the conditions con-

Crete, from a theoretical point of view, does not make any step forward with respect to Marx's Brussels speech. In fact, rather a step back...» 118

Then there was - or at least it does not appear - who understood the full meaning of these words of Parvus, which address a problem that here we generically say of differentiation between Marx and Engels, which emerged sensationally only later, and in recent times, among Marxist scholars, philosophers and economists.

Engels, emphasizes Parvus "takes the problem" of freedom of trade "from a historical point of view" and that's it '. « As in other things, even in the face of the issues of commercial policy, which as a result of the parliamentary influence achieved by the socialist workers' parties take on a topical interest, we find ourselves as never before faced with the fact that the founders of scientific socialism died too soon. And we must-

Mo, if it's okay, try to help us alone '*.
Like Bernstein, naused by the paralysis of thought induced by supine devotion to the "founders", but in a direction completely contrary to his own, Parvus tried to make the meninges of the socialists work. And, in this direction: of an operating Marxism, he was the first to also say that it was necessary to think with one's own head even according to the Marxist method. These, so summarily cultured, are the revolutionary points of that His

Article. In it he also develops a controversy against Schip-pel who, inspired by the well-known sociologist H. Rickert, had come up with a theory of "workers as consumers", a "party

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117 Ibidem, p. 581.
118 Ibidem, p. 586.
119 Ibidem, p. 584.
120 Ibidem, p. 587.

Of consumers » 12. As today, in the great ball of discourses on consumerism, Schippel went so far as to see in the consumer the great victim, the poor oppressed and alienated by exploitative capitalism. But to speak of workers "only as consumers", Parvus replies, "is the same as considering them only as producers" 1', This is not the line of demarcation. That year, on the « Neue Zeit », the articles of Parvus would follow one after the other, one or two weeks later. The warning just pronounced for a political and theoretical interest of the socialists to the problem of commercial policy was reiterated in the article on "agricultural import duties": 123 it is true, he told you, that "the working class must establish a state power precisely in place of the capitalist state power, but from this history of agricultural duties comes an important political morality also for the proletariat" 14. The warning, as had already happened on his part before, was directed against the leadership of the party, which, in the face of the great debate in the Reichstag on the alternative customs barriers or free trade, had declared that the socialists had to remain alien to the issues and difficulties of the bourgeois economy. In these writings, Parvus strives to demonstrate that the economic trend of society, German and international, even if bourgeois, affects the workers in the first place, and therefore the socialists must develop their own policy. Underline:

> « Therefore, if the working class also has an interest in the implementation of certain measures, it must at least renounce the fatalistic vision and must intervene as a political factor in development. Agrarian duties harm agriculture and contradict the interests of industry and therefore effective action by social democracy is necessary to break them down » 125.

Parvus' discourse expands to the international dimension in the documented subtle analysis and in the contained perspectives

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121 Ibidem, p. 588.

122 Ibidem, p. 587.

123 PARVUS, Die Landwirtschaftliche Einfürzölle, « Neue Zeit», 1900/ 1901, B.1.

124 Op. cit., p. 619.

125 Ibidem.

In the essay on industrial duties and the world market 16. Starting in controversy with F. List and his school, who stood up as "scientific defenders" of customs protectionism, he outlines "the conditions of industrial development" of the time, underlining the importance of credit and the money market.

Where he comes to note that "in underdeveloped countries The part that touches the class of the capitalists is more Big », He knows to touch a point that even then was painful for Marxists, namely the theory of the impoverishment (or progressive impoverishment) of workers the greater the development of capitalism. Many objections had already been raised to this theory and, as is known, its validity is still being discussed today: and there are those who reject it as outdated, those who still support it. It is interesting to see that Parvus had critically addressed Also this theme. It also pursues here the analysis of the rate of profit in a comparison between factories in developed countries and factories in backward countries, of labor productivity and the spread of machines and electricity to arrive at the link between the economy and democratic political forms.

But, mainly, it is the then insurgent and dominant phenomenon of the world market that attracts his attention.

This phenomenon then was not seen to the due extent and here Parvus is a pioneer.

> « In international circulation, individual banknotes enter as simple goods in mutual competition and decisive for their monetary value is their golden value... However, a country's ability to enter the world market depends on the overall sum of its international commercial transactions in correlation with its own economic development and with the financial management of the state. Moreover, since the economic balance of a capitalist state, as a result of the lack of production planning, cannot be calculated, its ability to pay on the world market is also an indefinable amount.

Parvus continues:

> « The world market has its own big move-

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126 PARVUS, Die Industriezölle und der Weltmarkt, « Neue Zeit», 1900/ 1901, B.1.

127 Op. cit., p. 715.

Lifting and falling wave chin, things that cannot be disturbed, altered, slowed down,

Neither

Raised through the trade policy of a single state; which, for their part, act on the industrial development of individual countries in a fruitful or paralyzing, regulatory or disruptive way. There are periods of general tension of all forces... The laws of these movements of the world market attract the gaze of the capitalist observer: their arrival and their passing, however, remain unmotivated. We, for our part, are content at this point to note these great disturbances » 128... « The protective duties introduced by Europe at the end of the 1970s have greatly contributed to creating and maintaining a situation of economic depression from which European industry could only free itself with difficulty towards the end of the century. But, although slowed down, the development of the world market has nevertheless progressed powerfully. And at this moment its result is that, instead of competition between individual industrial states in Europe, it is a whole part of the world. In order to be able to hold out in this huge global struggle, free trade is a sine qua non condition for Western Europe. Because, just as European capital is mean to the working class, it is also mean to its trade policy. Torn in himself, he hunts down fragmentary and momentary interests. Hence the political fight. Europe suffers more than ever from Klein-staaterei *. Although, in fact, the states have become larger, their overall historical value has increased even more. It's the curse of political tradition. Finally free trade will clean up all this, it will create large national complexes, it will lead to the United States of Europe.

But this will perhaps be his strongest obstacle in Europe » 129.

In March 1899 on Struve's "Načalo" appeared a more than favorable review signed by VI. The in, as Lenin still called himself, of The World Market and the Agrarian Crisis by Parvus, released in Russian 130. And on September 1st from his Siberian exile he asked his mother to get him « ...making them arrive from Dresden, the numbers of the « Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung » with the

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128 Ibidem, pp. 715-16.

* Division into small states.

12 Ibidem, pp. 783-84.

190 PARVUS, Agrarnyi krizis i mirovoj rynok, Sankt Peterburg 1898. For the rec. of Lenin cf. Complete works, cit., vol. 4, pp. 65-66.

Articles by Parvus against Bernstein »'. Like Parvus, Lenin immediately understood the value of Bernstein and the renewing shock he had given to the doctrinal routine that made Marxism a collection of formulas to be rehashed. We have evidence of this in a letter he wrote to Krupskaja in 1900, from

Ufa where the two were exiled:

> ".. From a theoretical point of view, wouldn't Bernstein give anything? 'It's idiocy!', but, heck, the practical importance of his book is enormous: he turned his attention to the need of the masses, called life, to concreteness. The success of the book is explained by the fact that the orthodox address has really lost its flavor » 132.

But Parvus was now far beyond what was written: appro
He founded the economic study in a new essay "3

On the crisis

Commercial and the unions, which addressed the theory of crises, the action of the banks, the Sturm und Drang of capital, the balance of the rise and what the unions should do in such con-

Joint. It is true, he said, that today the crises no longer correspond to Marx's predictions: we must study the new modes of development of capitalism. Bernstein is absolutely right about that. But the deductions of Parvus' study were opposite to Bernstein's. These deductions also seemed so convincing and important to Kautsky that he wrote:

> « Parvus also intervenes with his new writing Handelskrisis und Gewerkschaften, a work that combines clarity and daring
>
> — here and there maybe too daring — with scientific depth and solves the difficult task in an excellent way... we'll talk about it again, because... it offers us new theoretical looks...» 14. Par-

In fact, vus stated:

> « There are times when the development of all sectors of the economy and capitalist societies: in technology, in the money market, in commerce, in the colonies, it is so

050rg Mature, which can produce an eminent dilation of the mer-

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131 V.I. LENIN, Complete works, cit., vol. 36, p. 56; vol. 37, p. 207.

132 V.I. LENIN, Pis'ma k rodnym, Moskva 1930, p. 45.

133 PARVUS, Trade Crisis and Trade Unions, München 1901; also In VRGS, PP. 84-133..

134 K. KAUTSKY, Krisentheorien, « Neue Zeit », 1901/902, B.2, pp. 80-81.

World cato, that the entire world production is raised on a very extensive new basis. Then begins a period of Sturm und Drang for capital. The periodic exchange between development and crisis is not eliminated, but the rise develops in stronger progression, the crisis acts more harshly, but it is of shorter duration. So it is until the Accumulated development potentials do not reach their Apex. Then the harshest explosion of the trade crisis occurs, which finally passes into economic depression.

The economic depression is characterized by a slowdown in productive development. It reduces the size of development and its space, on the other hand, it lasts the commercial crisis, which however loses its sharpness. One almost has the impression that production can no longer rise again until the potential for development enters a new period of Sturm und Drang »".

« If the Parvusian theory of the periods of Sturm und Drang of capital is confirmed - commented Kautsky -, and the third of these periods in which we are inside has not yet passed, the rise that we still have to wait will first see a long depression, the danger of war will not decrease, but will increase » 16, and he added: « If this conception is confirmed, it represents a valuable complement and an enrichment of the Marxist theory of crises » 15.

A similar recognition by Kautsky was no small thing, certainly then it counted much more than the recognition of a Martov and a Lenin, but Parvus in any case at this time was considered one of the greatest Marxist theorists with minds that knew how to understand. In the Bernstein debate he said his word with the great sage on the opportunity-Nism in practice 138. «The entire campaign that lasts from four Years against Bernstein's revisionism pursues nothing more than clarity. To the right or to the left: should we stay on the ground of revolutionary socialism or should we become a social reformist party? Alone, no confusion, no political masking, no self-deception! » 139

: 135 PARvus, op. cit., p. 26.

136 K. KAutskY, op. cit., p.143.

157 Ibidem, p. 137.

138 See no. 107.

139 Op. cit., p. 740.

For Parvus, the ideal contestation of Bernstein's theses, which Luxemburg in her essay had still pursued in theory, on the one hand was something outdated and, on the other, it was something on which he did not seem appropriate for the moment to insist.

For the first aspect, in fact, what he himself had already Written directly on Bernstein and then on the agrarian and commercial crisis, on the customs system, on the world market were all in themselves refutations of Marxist political economy that constituted a fixed point to reconnect also in this discourse. For the second, that is, the direct theoretical controversy, it seemed to him that the use of arrows that could easily be popped up by economic developments should be avoided. He studied them and therefore knew how complex and unpredictable they were, while his companions like Luxemburg, Kautsky, not to mention Plechanov, based their reasoning on the interpretation of the sacred texts. If you wanted to seriously address Bernstein's theoretical ground, you also had to take into account Werner Sombart and Conrad Schmidt, who before Bernstein had questioned the scientificity of Marxism, and the same dubious reply of Engels still alive at that time 10

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Chapter 5 (Der Bernstein Revisionismus) Parvus argued "that scientific knowledge knows no stasis; that, with the development of economic conditions, a revision of economic theories also becomes necessary is even trivial to say.

Nobody disputes it » 141 . And instead the Plechanov challenged it, Axelrod, Potresov, Luxemburg, also Marchlewski and Rakovski and certain Germans for whom Marxism was a new table of law and not a method (die uns von Marx und Engels überlieferte geschichtliche Methode) "2 According to the diction of the title, the essay was however addressed more than Bernstein's system of ideas, to the practical consequences of them for the movement.

They were the consequences of opportunism to which, Par-vus wrote, Bernstein had "provided a correct class instinct" 143:

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140 F. ENGELS, Additional considerations to the III Book of Capital in K. MARx, Il Capitale, Rome 1955, III, 1, pp. 36 sgg.

141 PARVUS, op. cit., p. 740.

142 Ibidem, p. 615.

143 Ibidem, pp. 747-49.

In addition to the abandonment of the "hope of the political domination of the proletariat", of the "dictatorship of the proletariat", the theories of compromise, adaptation, of the "growth within" of capitalism; the rejection of nationalizations and municipalizations; of combativeness even in parliament and even only for reforms, of the transformation of the army into "people's militia"; the thesis that the development of the unions leads to the strangulation of the capitalist class, to the general elimination of capitalist private property"'* up to "a "complete assimilation to the politics of the state"" Therefore "opportunism within social democracy is nothing more than a national liberalism" 146

These were the sins of opportunistic revisionism, but, as already before and now and in the future more and more, in Parvus
It is present 'A fundamental conflict between his criticism, which stands out
For lucidity, consequentiality and abundance of matter, to the capitalist order, and an awareness, now confirmed by the studies, that capitalism is a machine, albeit monstrous, which however works, is perfected, is changing the world. In any case, it was a matter of making it clear what the reality of the era was: we are already in the period of imperialism, already "Engels wrote this word" 147 in 1885, "capitalist development proceeds much faster than the development of the so-called 'public opinion', that is, the ideas that set the tone in parliament and in the press, are always significantly behind" 148 No one says, for example, that "the industrial future belongs to America and Russia. Compared to the old Europe, these countries have the advantage of geographical position, of an imposing extension, of gigantic dimensions... of political unity » 14). And again, as already in his previous writing, he warns that:

«The entire Kleinstaaterei of Western Europe facing the formation of the powerful industrial complexes of Ame-

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1t Ibidem, pp. 787-791 et passim.

: 145 Ibidem, p. 794.

146 Ibidem.

147 Ibidem, p. 613.

148 Ibidem, p. 614.

149 Ibidem, p. 613.

> Rica and Russia will increasingly constitute an obstacle to capitalist economic development. The formation of a united Europe will be an increasingly pressing necessity of the world market. But a united Europe is conceivable only as a republican Europe » 150. Then this perspective can be outlined: "monopoly of a capitalist association or collectivism! » I1.

And Parvus puts forward a new thesis: since "the development of social democracy cannot ignore the general political development", "even in the struggle for emancipation of the proletariat, as in the economic and political development of capital, there are periods of enhanced development and delayed development" 152, We are in 1901: from his analysis he draws that capitalism is now a world system; that the party must take this fact into account and develop an active policy in the masses on two directions: the revolutionary perspective and the assiduous intervention on all the problems of the state, and this not only in the Reichstag, but wherever possible. because the workers must be class of government.

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150 Ibidem, p. 614

151 Ibidem.

152. Ibidem, p. 610.

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THE SUGGESTION OF THE "WORKER DEMOCRACY"

Starting from 1900 Parvus took an active part in the controversy among the Russian social democrats (whose most visible leaders: Plechanov, Potresov, Axelrod, Martov, Lenin and then Trotsky, all lived in exile) first of all with the foundation of the "Iskra", then with the articles on it until the last issue and other writings, as well as through continuous personal contact. In 1904 he became the mentor of Trotsky. In October 1905 the two went clandestinely to Russia and were at the head of the Petersburg soviet and the events, implementing the lesson of the mass political strike and the permanent revolution developed by Parvus from 1896 onwards. Throughout this period, the theoretical-political function of Parvus has a decisive weight already starting from the elaboration of the concept of a revolutionary party. Since this is the period on which the attention of historiography is more, and almost solely, focused on theoretical Parvus, we will try to avoid repetitions of what has already been written in the texts indicated 153

15a Z. A. ZEMAN, op. cit., 1962; Milan 1967; V. ZILI, op. cit.; V. STREET, Introduction to: V.I. LENIN, What to do?, Turin 1971, pp. VII-XCI; L. MARTOv-F. DAN, History of Russian social democracy, Milan 1973; A. BRossAT, Aux origines de la révolution permanente, Paris 1974; M.L. SALvaDorI, op. cit., Pp. 581-587; V. STRADA, The polemic between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks on the 1905 revolution in History of Marxism, op. cit., pp. 472-477; G. MIGLIAR-DI, Lenin and the Mensheviks. The « Iskra » (1900-05), Milan 1979; M. Löwy, Introduction to: L. TrocKIJ, Before January 9, Milan 1982, pp. 7-13 (in addition to Trotsky's writing the volume also contains the Preface of Parvus, both in unfortunately approximate translation. Inguagli on also in: C. WEIll, Russian Marxists and German social democracy 1898-1904, Paris, 1977.

Parvus was kept out of internal party struggles, because

In view of

Having welcomed him in the

Party, they kept it

At bay as

"Russian". However, he intervenes with the writings and contacts for-

Sonali. In a few years, through the controversy between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, the distribution of the parts takes place. A first major ridge of discrimination is the concept of party: a social democratic party of the type of the German one or a party for the revolution? This conception had already been pursued and theorized for years by Parvus and Luxemburg, and Lenin, March-lewski, Rakovski, Trotsky, Martov himself were added. The second ridge is within this notion of the party: in the construction of a centralized, selective, undemocratic party Lenin immediately finds himself alone. Plechanov is the first to accuse him of bonaparti-smo. Endless diatribes begin. New parts distributions will take act. But the important fact is that the elaboration of what will be the world communism of our century is determined in those years and the men who think and act in this direction are those remembered here, regardless of the sides. Especially Parvus, Luxemburg, Lenin, Martov and Trotsky are the brains of this operation; then, everyone will go their own way.

What was the place that Parvus occupied between German and Russian socialism and what his way of considering and the one and the other movement stands out from his own words:

5 « The German social democracy became my new homeland. Over the course of more than a quarter of a century my spiritual activity, my dreams and my hopes were intertwined

With the activity of the German social democracy:

With it I

I was enthusiastic and with it I lived the disillusions. There were disagreements and differences between us, I was right and I was wrong, I got angry and rebelled, I criticized and continued to criticize, but one thing I could never do: get out of social democracy. When I criticized the Russian socialist intelligentsia, I often reproached her for missing this living link with the labor movement. Although the Russian intellectuals wisely wrote about socialism, everything resonated with bookistic wisdom; the working masses lost their life force and turned into statistical figures; socialism became the implementation of an abstract principle, for which the intelligencija was ready to sacrifice the whole world, Including the working class. In reality, for the mass of Russian intelligence, socialism was only an instrument for the revolution. Long before 1906 and then in the years following this, which weigh like a nightmare on everyone, I had foreseen and predicted the detachment of the Russian intelligencija from workers' socialism. I was interested in the events in Russia, before and after, always from the point of view of German social democracy, that is, I considered them from the point of view of their

Influence on the political development of Western Europe in

Relation to the approach of the social revolution » 154,

Since the birth of the "Iskra", Parvus' attempt was to associate these two forces: the powerful mass movement of the SPD, an expression of an industrial society and a European culture, and the doctrinal elaboration of the Russian intellectual avant-gardes, from Plechanov to Lenin, from Struve to Martov. In his opinion, the first lacked a revolutionary Marxist head; the second, the body of a mass movement. The two united forces, cohesive, could have changed the history of Europe in the sense of revolutionary democracy. In vain Parvus "impatiently reproached the Russian exiles for their 'retardness and smallness-

They were orientals and wanted to teach them the Western political custom. Despite these ridiculous poses, the Russians still considered him their leader in world politics and economy » 155. He was among the first to react to the party's Leninist conceptions.

In November 1903 in the article The beginning of the end? 1% wrote:

> «The organization is not... a dead tie that is thrown over the masses but a ferment that is injected into the masses to generate a living tissue. Those who believe... to gather in their own hand the cables and tie rods to command the workers from a precise point, be it Petersburg or Geneva, follow the delusional idea that social democracy can govern the masses as well as Russian absolutism could never govern them ».

Then without even imagining it, here Parvus had again hit the mark: the story would have shown that the pro-

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1% PARvUS, In Kampf um die Wahrheit, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

155 I. DEUTSCHER, The armed prophet, Milan 1956, p. 143.

156 PARVUS, Der Anfang vom Ende?, « Aus der Weltpolitik», N. 48 (30. 11,1903).

Leninist jet would have led to a way of governing that far exceeded Russian absolutism; that dominance over the party, of which Lenin was then accused, was only the very first step towards the dominance of the party over society, on the countries, over the world. And, in a letter from the end of February, to Potresov:

> « Have you read Struve's sheet? He unifies the opposition elements and with us the Central Committee and the central body disorganize... And all the organizational work done so far in monstrous conditions goes up in smoke, because of the per-
>
> Sone, who believe themselves political leaders, cannot subordinate tactical divergences to the real necessity of the historical moment, they cannot put themselves above the tormalities
>
> E
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> Of offended self-esteem ». 157.

The meeting with Lenin in Geneva in August 1904 further distanced the two men. In a letter to Potresov in March he wrote: "You know the state of affairs in Russia better than I do, but I fear that you underestimate the conspiratorial activity of the Central Committee and Lenin. 15. That Lenin tended to bona-partisanism, as Plechanov said, to make the party « a Jacobin club... that dragged itself behind the most active layers of the proletariat » 15°, as Axelrod said; that his thesis of « revolutionary centralism » threatened the dictatorship, that « in revolutionary circles it was known that he was hungry for power and did not care too much about the means » 10 was such a widespread opinion, as all the sources testify, that fame also ran among the German socialists and, of course, among the Russians of the other parties. The Parvusian conception of the party is as far as ever from the conspiratorial, military one of Lenin. In fact, he wrote to Axelrod: «... The question can be traced back to whether the Russian social democracy will be up to its task: to exploit the great historical moment, to create a class organization of the proletariat..» 11E

Ancora « ...I know and many times I have already written it, that the proletariat

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157 SDD, p. 111.

158 Ibidem, p. 115.

159 « Iskra », 15.1.1904.

160 A. TYRKOVA-WILLIAMS, Na putjach k svobode [On the road of the li-Bertà], New York 1952, p. 188.

161 SDD, p. 108.

In his political struggle he cannot stand outside the general life of the state, but he must penetrate all its corners and ravines and fill them with the contradiction of his class interests... » 182

Parvus, at the beginning of February 1904, reiterated in a letter to Potresov what he publicly announced in an article on the-

The "Iskra" of those days, but here more explicitly:

> « We are facing a revolution in Russia and, according to all appearances, on the threshold of major events in the West. The pace of political development will probably accelerate. I have projects of all kinds » 163. « You all seem to make the move and instead you are just a cook in front of the pot of history and you can't even skim the broth in time; now you fight among yourselves and you are ready to overturn the historical soup to eat which you have been inviting all of Russia for a long time » 164,

On March 1st, also in Potresov:

> « The events overturn sich*. And what does the social-Russian democracy? Quo usque tandem! » 165.

Like a seismograph, Parvus felt the deep shocks in the bowels of Russia, he felt the urgent need for historical times. The Letter to Lenin 1e of December 1904 is a moment of his political vision and controversy over the conception of the party. With vigor he still publicly took a stand against Lenin in the essay In what we diverge in which we read:

> « Those who only aspire to an organization of agitators and ignore the organization of the masses, believe that they know how to use the workers as material for the revolution, just as they serve as cannon meat in the army... For Lenin
> Organization is a mental pattern... For Lenin, the organizational scheme he himself invented is a kind of trumpet of Jericho thanks to which, untying his cheeks, he prepares to destroy with the sermon of the revolution both the

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162 Ibidem, p. 109. My cursive (p.zv.).

163 Ibidem, p. 110.

164 Ibidem, p. 112.

* The events precipitate (German in the Russian text).

165 Ibidem, p. 113.

166 PARVUS, Pis'mo k Leninu, Zeneva 1904. Also in RiR, pp. 177-81.

> Towers of autocracy, both the walls of capitalism... Immense and multiform is the class struggle of the workers, since multiform and immense is their historical task. They must not only break down the domination of the capitalist class, but they must know how to put themselves in their place to pave the way for the development of a socialist system... And in front of this grandiose historical process stands a little man with a worried face and, with a revolutionary flutter of arms, gets busy, strives so that both socialism and revolution do not disappear » 167.

Revening their controversy, he adds: "If Lenin has come to find himself in the situation of the gogolian wife of the non-commissioned officer, let him cry himself. You wanted it, George Dan-din! » 16s. In the essay After the war, on the eve of the peak of the revolutionary uprisings of 1905, Parvus focuses on the reasons for the divergences:

> «With conspiratorial anguish, arising on the ground of the Russian intelligence, in Lenin's What to Do are intertwined with unfair general conceptions... He [Lenin] is an opportunist upside down. Assuming that the labor movement is opportunistic, he wants to make it turn in a revolutionary sense... I have already mentioned that the workers did not create socialism as a political worldview. But they will create the social revolution... Socialist ideas only make sense in that they are the expression of this real historical process. Lenin, on the other hand, transformed materialistic socialism into ideology. According to him, the doctrine must change the character of the political process. Hence its organizational task: the enlightened Marxists, strong of their centralization, direct the working mass into the channel of the social revolution. This task in the eyes of Lenin best coincides with the idea of an organization of professional revolutionaries. Lenin is a straight author, who knows no nuances. As a politician, he can stand on his head, but he can't stand the oscillations » 169,

Here Parvus highlights the essence of Leninism both as a party and as an ideology and history will confirm this reversal: the party-state above the masses, as a new tsarism; the masses as its instrument; trivialized Marxism,

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187 PARVUS, V čem my raschodimsja, RiR, p. 173.
168 Ibidem, p. 176.
169 PARVUs, Posle vojny, « Iskra», N. 111 (24.9.1905); RiR, p. 190.

Ossified and completely misrepresented into an ideology of support for the party-state; again, as in tsarism, a theocratic state.

During this period Parvus also wrote that important and foresighted series of articles, which will be published on the « Iskra » from the end of November to January 1905 with the title The war and the revolution "°. The revolution began with a crowd movement led by an Orthodox priest, the pop Gapon. No one imagined it, least of all Lenin, who will later say:

> « Two months before January 1905 and on the eve of February 1917 no revolutionary, whatever his experience and knowledge, no one who knew popular life could have predicted that such a case would have caused Russia to explode » 171.

And instead the first Russian revolution was foreseen in these articles by Parvus and by a man who was on the other side, by that former leader of the Ochrana, by that insightful Zubatov, who "in a confidential relationship had assumed that Russia could not emerge victorious from the war against Japan, which would inevitably lead to mass revolutionary actions.

A year before the revolution of 1905 he outlined in that special report such a picture of the future, the approach was so logical, that that report was for Minister Durnovo first the basis of a preparatory work and then of all the measures to repress the revolution » 172

Parvus wrote:

> « The Russian-Japanese war is the bloody dawn of future major events. It has been prepared in Europe, more than in Asia and America »... « Everything I write here is the result of my observations already expressed on the 'Leipziger Ilg Volkzeitung' in 1895; then in many articles on the Eastern Question, on Manchuria, on Franco-Russian relations, on England's commercial policy, published in the Neue
> Nu Zeit' and on my 'Aus der Weltpolitik'»... « The war between the Japan and Russia have broken the connection, which already a

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170 PARVUS, Vojna i revoljucija, « Iskra », Nn. 59, 79, 82 (10.11.1904-1.1. 1905); RiR, pp. 83-133.

171 V. LENIN, Socinenija, t. XXIII, Pp. 118-119 (Speech to the V Pan-Russian Congress of Soviets, July 1918).

My d72 P.P. ZAVARZIN, Zandarmy i revoljucionery, Paris 1930, p. 61.

Barely endured, of the political relations of the capitalist states. The political balance of the capitalist world is mi-

Naciato...». « The English influence on Asia is paralyzed. The war, which began only for Manchuria, already calls into question the hegemony over Asia. It will still end with

A shift in the political balance around the world and its first consequence will be the fall of the Tsarist autocracy » 173.

In the second article of the series, published at the beginning of March

It's titled The fall of the autocracy

, it is determined that

"The Russian state order is an absolutism in the Asian manner, supported by an army according to the European model"... "the Russian autocracy threatens the political development of Western Europe with a permanent danger". « The Russian system of servitude wants to be called the state order.. An industry was born, but autocracy prevented the creation of an industrial state. The army is weak, because there can be no modern army without education and political freedom. Unlike Russia, Japan adopts capitalism as a whole as the most perfect and appropriate system for the time in the economic, social and political spheres. Japan's brilliant progress in the grafting of capitalism is historical evidence of the extent to which the process of the social revolution can be accelerated. Russia, on the other hand, has a powerless army, because it wanted to create a militaristic state without the political conditions that such an army needs. Russian aggression in foreign policy to the point of war is always necessary for it in order to preserve the system. Russian diplomatic skill is excellent, one success follows another, but it lacks the ability to feel the limit moment beyond which each further step can bring everything down ».

The first two articles were released at the beginning of the year, the other two in the series were even released in the following December. In these months, many of Parvus' prophecies had already been confirmed by the facts. Of the two most sensational: the revolution in Russia and that the war with Japan was only the first of a series of European and world wars, history will respectively confirm with the revolution in Russia on January 9, 1905 and with the

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173 PARVUS, "Iskra", No. 59 (10.11.1904), passim.

14 PARVUS, Padenie samoderzhavija, « Iskra», N. 61 (5.3.1904), passim.

Events until the First World War and beyond. In the last article of the series Autocracy and reforms "> we read:

> « The Tsarist government consents to reforms, but at the same time fears reforms. He would like to implement state transformations such as to keep all the power in his hands, but he also fears that, by starting to reform, a breach will open up to the pressure of the social and popular forces, in front of which he would no longer be able to hold. He doesn't resolve reforms, because he's afraid of revolution... ... Preparing to implement 'reforms' from above, it falls prey to a feverish tremor and explodes in an intolerant anger when 'from below' not even needs echo, but quiet wishes for such reforms ».

It is adduced among other things - continues Parvus - "the rotting influence of the revolutionary ideas of the West". Parvus also illustrates the specificity of Russian absolutism that,

> « because of all its political character it is not able to implement serious state reforms in the country, it cannot even allow political freedom: freedom of the press, of assembly, etc., since with this, it is understood, it would only give space to the agitation and organization of political forces against it... That is why, on the road to reform, the Russian government will always fall into new contradictions. The result will be the instability of his policy.

In this article he still wrote:

> «History has often run for the nose of those who thought they were entying it... Men have never been able to make full use of the conditions they themselves have created. They always seem to be running forward and in reality they are left behind the objective historical process ».

And so he concluded the last article of the series:

> “The global process of capitalist development leads to a political upheaval in Russia — this upheaval cannot but be reflected in the political development of countries around the world. The Russian revolution will shake the capitalist world in its political bases and the Russian proletariat can play the leading role of the social revolution ».

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175 PARvus, Samoderzhavie i reformy, «Iskra», N. 82, 1.1.1905.

He was the first to say things like this: before Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky, he will take the novelty and value in his nose and will devote himself with acumen and passion to elaborating them. The last statement had already been overshadowed two years earlier by

Kautsky in the article The Slavs and the Revolution 176, but it was a Generic, hypothetical phrase, written more as a warning against the Philistine routine of German social democracy, than a meditated thesis. And the events of 1904-05 were still far away.

In these articles by Parvus, on the contrary, it is fully topical and is based on the concreteness of an articulated and organic theoretical-political reasoning, which contains nodal moments that so far no one had faced with such acumen. All the essays written by Parvus during this year, in the Russian press as well as on the German one, as well as his positions in private correspondence, place him among the most fervent and original minds of European Marxism, give him the place of a leader of the theoretical and political movement that worked for the revolution.

By now Parvus has defined his theoretical structure that includes: the original conception of the Russian state as a symbiosis of Asian despotism and European absolutism; the international vision of the economic and political development of capitalism; the problem — then for the first time posed by him and then by Trotsky also developed separately — of the revolution in a backward country, in contrast to the advanced and well-known positions of Orthodox Marxism; the thesis that the nation states were no longer decisive in the game of forces of world economic interests; the revolutionary possibilities inherent in the mass political strike. And a profound lesson about the indispensability of economic-political analysis, of the continuous and flexible connection between daily politics and revolutionary ends, of the opening to vast horizons in spatio-temporal terms, beyond the borders of ideology, tradition, culture.

One of his few widely cited writings is the important preface '" to Trotsky's pamphlet Before January 9, which

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176 K. KauTskY, Slavjane i revoljucija, « Iskra», N. 118 (10.11.1902).

17 PARVUS, Cto daët nam 9-oe janvarja, in: L.D. TroCKIJ, Do devjatogo janvarja, Zeneva 1905; RiR, pp. 134143 (with some cuts due to the census-Ra). See also no. 153.

It doesn't contain anything very different from what Parvus had already written since 1896 and until now. In this preface of only twelve pages, but full of new theses, Parvus instead outlined the entire political program of the first Russian revolution. First of all, for the first time it raised the question of the taking of power by the proletariat. That's why he made an impression on the whole

Party and out.

> «January 9th opens a new era in historical destinies
> Of Russia. Russia has entered a revolutionary period-
> Nario
>
> Of its development... the idea of a provisional revolutionary government and a democratic republic, which until now appeared utopian, acquire a character of political reality ».

Since Trotsky in his text had attacked the liberals and their political inconsistency above all, Parvus explains the historical reasons for this. In Western Europe, he says, cities have developed thanks to the middle classes of crafts, who have made them centers of activity and commerce. Although this has now ceased following the dominance of capitalism, centuries of this history have created an active, conscious and often radical civilization and bourgeoisie. On the contrary, in Russia, where due to the centralization of the state, "the cities have developed more according to the Chinese model than according to the European model", that is, as "administrative centers" of the central power and as "trade bazaars for the surrounding owners and peasants".

In Russia, therefore, there is historically a bourgeoisie made up of bureaucrats and merchants, not the technical bourgeoisie that in Europe has roots prior to capitalism. Only in relatively recent times has capitalism in Russia created its own modern bourgeoisie, but it is still too small and isolated."

Do These Parvus positions were linked to the thesis of the semi-Asian character of the Russian state, set out in the previous essays, which had also put to good use the teaching of the famous historian and liberal politician P. Miljukov. But he gives a new interpretation and, perhaps for the first in the history of Marxism, distinguishes between bourgeois working, technical, entrepreneurial-

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178 RiR, see pp. 134-137.

Rial and bureaucratic, parasitic, politically inert classes, with all the implications that follow. On the other hand, "the peasants will be dragged into the movement in ever larger masses.

But they are only capable of increasing the country's anarchy and thus weakening the government, but they cannot form a compact revolutionary army. And Parvus concludes:

> "It is therefore only the proletariat that can bring
> To be completed The upheaval Revolutionary in Russia. Il
> Provisional government in Russia will be a government of workers' democracy. If social democracy will be at the head of the revolutionary movement of the
>
> As such
> Government
> Proletariat
> It will be social democratic. If instead the social democracy remains behind
>
> To the proletariat.. it will turn into a sect
> Unimportant » 180.
> "A provisional social democratic government in Russia cannot carry out a socialist revolution, but only the process of liquidation of the autocracy will give it a favorable ground for political work" 181.

If with this statement Parvus showed that he shared the opinion of the Mensheviks and of Lenin himself: that in Russia a bourgeois revolution was on the agenda and not a socialist revolution, however, he underlines the possibilities that open up:

> Ata socia demarazia must manage on the track not **soltanto**
> **l'ab** *partenza.*
> Of the revolution, but also the entire further development of
> It... It cTactics, but must prepare for a long
> Revolutionary » 182,nent

The moment of the bourgeois revolution thus remained for him susceptible to a radicalization or at least progression, which included at least a democratic constitution, the rights ci-

Vili, the parliament, the guarantee of the eight-hour working day, freedom of organization, social rights, or a demo-

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179 Ibidem, p. 140.

1a Ibidem, p. 141.

Is1 Ibidem.

182 Ibidem, p. 138.

Social craze. Here were inherent those concepts of workers' democracy and the opening of the revolution to further developments, which are the basis of the permanent revolution. But this writing of it, contrary to how it is often cited and judged, was only a chapter, no matter how important. The other chapters, in which the specificity of the Russian state is clarified, the world capitalist development is seen in its entirety and taken into consideration for the revolutionary effects it can have on backward Russia, and therefore the placement of the revolutionary perspective in an international context, had been, as we have seen, already written by him previously.

A later moment was the editorial I nostri compiti written by Parvus, who had been in Russia since October 1905, in the newspaper « Načalo ». It is still discussed today ". After summarizing the course of the European revolutions, he recalled that the European capitalism had penetrated Russia, had transformed it into its foundations and living conditions. « The revolution is a historical process... So we must not rely on the moment, but on prolonged development.' And here Parvus gets into the heart of the theory of the revolution debated in those years and specifies what his conception of "working democracy" is:

> «The immediate revolutionary purpose of the proletariat in Russia is to create a state order in which the demands of workers' democracy are ensured. Democracy operaia contiene tutte le richieste più radicali della demoCrazia, but attributes to some of them a particular character and adds new ones, purely proletarian ».

Here we see his concept reiterated and extended several times already Exposed, which he still specifies:

> «And so the revolution in Russia creates a particular link between the minimum program of social democracy and its final purpose. It is not the dictatorship of the proletariat, whose task is to radically change the production relations in the country, but we are already going beyond bourgeois democracy.
>
> Russia, we cannot yet make it our task to transform the bourgeois revolution into a social one. But,

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183 PARVUS, Naši zadači, « Načalo », 29.11.1905; translated into «Neue Zeit », 1905-06, B.1, pp. 451-58; RiR, pp. 198-207.

> Even less, we need to submit to the bourgeois revolution... Our task is to expand The limits of the bourgeois revolution, Pushing forward to the intern of it the interests of the proletariat and creating in the The same bourgeois constitution the broadest possible basis for the social-revolutionary upheaval».

Precisely in these lines of Parvus, according to the historian M. A. Salvadori, one must see "in a precise way the methodological foundations, so to speak, of the permanent revolution"[1] It is true, but as seen, he had pursued this theme for ten years. Of the same opinion are Z. A. Zeman and W. F. Scharlau in the books we mentioned, while other authors, such as I. Deutscher, A. Brossat, L. Löwy, instead see in Parvus simply the preparatory phase of that theory and in Trocky its creator[185]. What often introduces confusion in these attributions is the fact that Trotsky made it his workhorse throughout his life, while Parvus, more attentive to the developments of the economy and society, had already since 1907 had passed to a completely different conception of the revolutionary process.

But let's go back to that very important article. "We will push the bourgeoisie forward," Parvus continued. "It is in the proletariat's interest to support the bourgeoisie in its liberal opposition. We do not fear the successes of liberalism; on the contrary, they are the condition of our further successes... ", but "in all cases and in all situations we will ruthlessly criticize the class character of the bourgeois parties, the liberals as well as the democrats". This is the dynamic way in which he looked at these phenomena, an attitude very different from both that of the Mensheviks and that of the Bolsheviks. As for the peasants, Parvus reiterates his thesis, that they are lost on the historical scene by the revolution, but they only help it because they multiply the anarchy, not being able to "concentrate their political struggle". The thesis, put forward precisely that year by Lenin, of an alliance between the working class and the peasants to conquer power, was far-fetched, given the political inconsistency of the Russian peasantry; it will also be in the

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Ji1S4 M.L. SALvaDoRt, op, cit, p. 585.

185 See no. 153.

1917, when it will only work with the soldiers who came from the peasant, but who have gone through the horrors of war; not already with the great rural masses, who will indeed always be, in their huge majority, against the communists even after their seizure of power.

Then, at the head of the revolution was the soviet directed in fact by Trotsky (second president after Chrustalev) and by Parvus (third president, after the arrest of Trotsky). Lenin went there only once anonymously and said that it should not be a "workers' parliament" but a party combative organization 186 . He practically stayed out of the events, moving- Doses from one accommodation to another in the capital in endless meetings. Since the weapon of the strikes had become insane in mid-December due to the now low participation, the economic boycott of the state was passed. It was an idea that Parvus had cultivated since he had written the brochure on a hypothetical military coup in Prussia 17. As an expert in Russian finance, Parvus the current and on December 1 (14) the text was issued to all the newspapers of Petersburg and the next day published under the title Manifesto of the Soviet of the Workers' Deputies. His request to withdraw all deposits from banks demanding payment in gold, to boycott all economic life had a massive adhesion among the people. The state was seriously threatened with economic collapse and unled

The army and repression.

After these facts, living now in a condition of clan-destiny, Parvus took stock of the revolution in the wise.
The current political situation in Russia and the prospects for the future, that a brochure came out escaping censorship. The theory of the soviets was condensed in it, as a power other than that of bourgeois democracy. Lenin will reluctantly and belatedly accept the scheme, adopting it only in 1917 as a mask of grassroots democracy for his totalitarian state-party, having finally understood its suggestive effectiveness and strength

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180 V.I. LENIN, The revolution of 1905, Rome 1949, p. 219.

187 Cfr. cap. IV.

188 PARVUS, Nastojaščee položenie v Rossii i perspektivy na buduščee, St. Peterburg 1906; RiR, pp. 212-225; « Neue Zeit », XXIV, 1905-06, 2 B., PP. 108-120.

Magnetic for the people and intellectuals. The communists of the III International will parrotly repeat the formula now mediated through Lenin, ignoring both Parvus and Lenin's deception, who immediately strip the soviets of all power.

So, instead, as Parvus wrote:

> "In the Soviet of the workers' deputies of Petersburg it was heard for the first time that this institution was not only destructive, but also constructive. You can feel that a force was created here that was able to restructure the state...
>
> In addition, the soviet was the first effective elective representation of the popular masses... [workers] begin to see in the soviet the core of a new state power... The experience of all revolutions has shown that the people cannot overwhelm the army, but that they win with the fact that the army passes on his side ».

The article, which also contained polemical points against the Menshevik and Bolshevik fractions, ended with the reaffirmation of the proletariat's priority to manage its own cause, outside the parties:

> “Now the cause of the workers is in their hands. It depends on them whether they will know how to preserve and develop their organizations or not... when the soviets rise again, then they will leave far behind so far it has happened so fa Everything that

But the soviets will not be reborn until 1917 and will be a disorderly and confusing smengle behind which the seizure of Bolshevik power is carried out, which will soon reduce them to mere fiction. If this assertion of ours may seem to some reckless and partisan, let us at least refer to the picture that in the Chronicles of the Russian Revolution 19 gives N.N. Suchanov, one of the most visible leaders of the Petrograd Soviet of 1917 and his ardent supporter, as well as the other numerous historical testimonies from everywhere. Parvus will write in early 1918: "The Soviets are a mixed organization of a temporary revolutionary nature. They

They are much more reminiscent of a kahal 1%

Jewish than a modern one

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189 N.N. SUCHANov, Chronicles of the Russian Revolution, 2 vol., Rome 1967.

190 Institutions of self-administration of Jewish communities in the empire

Democracy... The proletariat must unite as a class separately from the others. The best forms, historically elaborated, are trade unions and social democracy according to the German model » 191.

Parvus no longer sees the possibility for the proletariat and socialism to assert themselves through soviets of this kind; they are a (Russian) experience opened in 1905, but now in '17 incapable of taking place and soon used as a vital fact, in any case unrepeatable.

PRECEDENDO KEYNES
NEL BILANCIO DELLA GUERRA [illegible]
PER LA RICOSTRUZIONE E [illegible]
(1917-1921)

Nel maggio '17 uscì il saggio *Il bilancio* [illegible] di cui allora non si compresero l'enorme [illegible] siero. Non s'era compiuto il terzo anno di guerra [illegible] vano ancora di poter uscire vincitori e di [illegible] un Parvus saltava fuori a scrivere: « E' [illegible] causato dalla guerra, che non potrà essere [illegible] nessuna vittoria, da qualsiasi parte essa sia. [illegible] tutti giacciono sotto le rovine. Il calcolo [illegible] parti » [illegible]. Vana è la disputa su chi ne sia il [illegible] Parvus:

> « La colpa principale della guerra sta nelle condizioni politiche e sociali dell'Europa, nel materiale esplosivo che vi si è accumulato, nella insufficiente [illegible] di difesa contro le spinte e il fuoco, nell'insufficiente [illegible] dei governi e nell'insufficiente controllo [illegible] dei fattori di potere che decidono della guerra e della pace » [illegible].

E aggiunge:

> « Si deve mantenere una [illegible] per cui l'intera Europa può esser trasformata in [illegible] un soldato.

[illegible] *Die soziale Bilanz des Krieges*, Berlin 1917; anche in: Par[illegible] *Aufbau und* [illegible]

Symbol of a theocratic, arbitrary and repressive power

Tsarist, become

Within the same.

191 PARVUS, In Kampf um die Wahrheit, cit., p. 65.

ZIP. VII

PRECEDING KEYNES

IN THE BALANCE OF WAR AND PEACE, FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND UNITY OF EUROPE

(1917-1921)

In May '17 the essay Il bilancio sociale della guerra 192 was published, of which at that time the enormous novelty and audacity of thought were not understood. The third year of war had not been completed, everyone still believed they could emerge victorious and collect layers. And a Parvus jumped out to write: "The damage caused by war is so great that it cannot be repaired by any victory, wherever it is. Winners or lost, everyone lies under the ruins. The calculation was wrong on all sides » 193. The dispute about who is to blame is in vain, he says

Parvus:

> « The main fault of the war lies in the political and social conditions of Europe, in the explosive material that has accumulated there, in the insufficient security measures against pressures and fire, in the insufficient responsibility of governments and in the insufficient popular control of the factors of power that decide war and peace » 194.

And he adds:

> "We must maintain a situation for which the whole of Europe can be turned to ruins if only one soldier,

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192 PARVUS, Die soziale Bilanz des Krieges, Berlin 1917; also in: PAR-vus, Aufbau und Wiedergutmachung, Berlin 1921, pp. 231-259, cited from now on as AuW. In Russian: Obščestvennye itogi vojny, Stockholm, 1917.

193 AuW, p. 233.

14 Ibidem, p. 245.

Uoriaco of grappa or feeling of power unloads his weapon? This is the question » 195,

First of all, peace, built on the "security of the law of peoples in the individual states", on the "political influence of the working masses", "on the law of the masses, whose lives and happiness have been destroyed" and not already "on the law of states" 19°. But, warns Parvus:

> « Peace itself is made an argument in favor of war. The gentlemen of the Entente are wary of accepting the peace proposals of the Central Powers by declaring: we must lead war until victory to guarantee the world a lasting peace. Firstly, this is a sophism; secondly, an impossible thing. Because if
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> The Agreement
>
> He actually managed to bring to their knees
>
> Central Powers, to snatch Alsace-Lorraine from Germany to the west and to
>
> East Posnania and Silesia, to destroy
>
> Austria and let grow at its expense a Russia still More gigantic, to close the outlet to Germany in the East and on the markets of the Pacific Ocean, — all things, and others Even greater, which will undoubtedly be expected in the event of a decisive victory on that side, - for Germany The question of his very existence, the question of his entire economic, political and cultural development... and The German people in all its parts will have no other thought than to repay the shame and injustice that have been done to them... The result therefore will not be a secure peace, but a lasting danger of war and a lasting rearming for war » 197,

It was not the first time that Parvus warned against Russian expansionism, nor will it be the last, while now, and in the following years, politicians and the military fear first of all the threat of German revanscism and believe to cancel it by beating that path that he already indicates here as the most dangerous, the one on which the specter of revanscism is really lurking and will be embodied in Hitler; the one that will also point out as fatal J.M. Key-nes, but two and a half years later, in his famous book The Eco-

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195 Ibidem.

196 Ibidem, p. 247.

197 Ibidem, p. 246.

Nomic Consequences of the Peace, ohe will cause a stir and con-

Troversie. But how many surprising similarities between this essay by Parvus, and another of his from 18, and the book by Keynes, published only in December 1919, whose title also so extraordinarily echoes the name of the Parvusian Institute for the Social Consequences of War. The research carried out by the latter was not unknown to English economists, as evidenced by the references to them that often appeared even during the war on the "Statemans Yearbook" that came out in London.

In that essay of his, when the war is still in full swing; Russia, although weakened, continues it; and Germany is firm and ready for new offensives, Parvus is probably the only one who poses the problem of reconstruction on a European and non-national scale. He hopes with the SPD "a peace without annexations and repairs", because "if only a part of the general costs is borne, this will lead to the economic ruin of Europe" 20. He supported this thesis with a financial-economic analysis and deduced that "the damage of this world war is so enormous that the whole of Europe must join its efforts to repair it. Here is the solution to the problem. Everyone must cooperate in reconstruction » 201

«The historical-world perspective has shortened in an unprecedented way: our hopes for the future have become needs of

. Since the war has decimated the population and there is a lack of labor, it is dear "with good living and working conditions"; with schools, because "without knowing, no capacity" 20. Against "the danger of the concentration of capital in a few hands", "an organization of the economy with the participation of the state, the communities, the cooperatives is needed: a complicated process, which changes the very character of the state and will have to be conducted through a growing political weight of the working class" 24. But "Europe can still assert itself on the mer-

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198 PARVUS, Der Friede und der Sozialismus, Berlin 1918.

199 Selskabet for Sozial Forskens af Kriegens Folger, Copenhagen (1915-1924).

20 PARVUS, AuW, p. 248.

201 Ibidem, p. 249.

212 Ibidem, p. 256.

203Ibidem.

21 Ibidem, p. 257.

World cato only if it provides quality work. Civilized nations must also represent culture in industry.
Therefore, an intelligent, enlightened, well-educated working force is needed » ∞s. And again: "Capitalism has subordinated the internal market to the foreign one. Hence the overweight of the so-called interests of the world market, imperialism, etc. »6. Instead, let us look at how reconstruction requires the internal market: "The rise in the social condition of workers has become a basic need for the development of Europe"™, the internal market "is unlimited, it grows in corresponding social conditions with the same production, it is the only secure basis for industrial development" 208

, it is about building "a new culture of cities and growing a new generation with enough air and light".

Parvus' perspective is European, under the sign of a democratic and constructive socialism: "The Europe on which modern civilization rests must unite for a united action in work and science" 210

This meditation continued in the aforementioned essay Peace and Socialism ? Of the end of 1918. Parvus affirms the close consequences of the revolutions from the wars: "The success of the German revolution was highly conditioned by the failure of German militarism, as was the success of the Russian revolution by the defeat of the tsarist armies. Thus the war acted in a revolutionary way on both sides » 212, That the League of Nations, which was desired to « build peace on a democratic basis », warns Parvus, « is not already now buried » making it « a coalition of military states, excluding Germany or assigning it a humiliating place ».

> « The League must be an alliance of peace and not a league to force peace. It must rest on the commonality of

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205 Ibidem.

206 Ibidem, p. 258.

2207 Ibidem.

205 Ibidem.

209 Ibidem, p. 259.

210 Ibidem.

? I I PARVUs. Der Friede und der Sozialismus, op. cit.; also in AuW. All subsequent quotes are from this text.

212 Op. cit., p. 212.

> Interests of the united nations and not on the subjection of each other »....
> « Europe and the whole of humanity are facing an aut-aut. Either it disarms or militarism extends worse than before and drags new and ever-increasing popular masses into the warm. These are: Russia, China, Indies Orien-
>
> Such, North and South America » 213,

Keynes will be inspired by this same general vision when he writes, a year later, commenting on the Treaty of Versailles:

« They have neglected the economic unity of Europe » ... « but Europe forms a compact bloc: France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Holland, Russia, Romania, Poland breathe in unison »;

He will talk about "humiliated enemy", the "destructive meaning of the peace of Paris", he will say that "we hope for the re-establishment and healing of Europe as a whole" and that "an era is dead" 214

Parvus at the end of 1918 examined in his essay the situation of the major countries in view of a new world balance, starting with Russia, where Lenin had been laboriously riding for a year:

> « Inside a League of Nations or outside of it, Russia's military-industrial state will bring the balance to its side. Western Europe won't be able to hold the weight... If there is no general disarmament, perhaps within twenty years Russia will be in control of the situation. The great historical comparison between the West and the East of Europe is approaching its conclusion...» ..« If Germany is trampled on, it will be Russia that will assert itself militarily and politically ».
>
> "... Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia and Poland — all this will be wiped out; if Russia develops its military power, all these are ephemeral formations, which will not last a generation... » 215,

Parvus' point of view was geopolitical and the events he recommended on this basis had to inevitably take place even through different phases in a process conditioned by the

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213 Ibidem, p. 216.

214 J.M. KEYNES The economic consequences of peace, Paris MCMXX p. 8, 9, 13, 14 (ed. fr.).

215 PARvus, op. cit., p. 217-219.

Zig-zag of the story. The same will happen for the United States which, he wrote:

> « Through this war they became a great military power... They have engaged in Europe and can no longer back down. The gap between the old and the new
> The world is outdated... The development of military technique will make space differences even more illusory. And the rearming of China and the West Indies in front of that already existing military state that is Japan will also include
> America in the orbit of weapons... America is located
> Faced with the choice of whether to consistently fulfill its role of peace, promoting a general disarmament, or bring the fire into one's own home, with which it will have that from the world war a world militarism will come out » 216

> «We are facing a world change in the world 217 « We must be penetrated by the awareness that a new era of world history is taking over, new times are looming in which we will fight with other means and other combinations of forces will form. It's the world of socialism that
>
> Starts 218

In reality, the era of socialism was not beginning, but of the abuse of the word socialism for every political adventure, for every dictatorship. From Bolshevism to Nazism, this call will be necessary as a tool for covering and mobilizing the masses.

The need for the "sun of the future", of this new substitute dream, was now so widespread in them after so many blurred illusions, that not only the history of Europe, but of the whole world from the end of that First World War to the present day will bear its name and, as in the name of the homeland and the family, also in its name all misdeeds and deceptions will be perpetrated. But, at the end of '18, rightly feeling the strong pressure to rise from below in this sense, it was still legitimate to trust in the lucidity, sincerity of intent, political foresight and organizational capacity of that democratic European socialism that had such a long history behind it and seemed the most serious alternative to the conservative and nationalist right

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216 Ibidem, pp. 220-21.

217 Ibidem, p. 223.

218 Ibidem, p. 222.

And to left-wing maximalism. Parvus still believes in it, who will soon be disappointed; Kautsky believes in it until death, against Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, and, like him, many and many will believe it until today.

Parvus then claimed that "the unity of German social democracy was essential... which would be the biggest revolutionary fact... which would give rise to a broad front for the international union of the socialist proletariat... and the solidarity of the workers of all countries would facilitate the solution of the economic problems of the

Peace »?'.

For this purpose, Germany had to disarm first, set an example for others by also abolishing the war industry and compulsory military service 2. The same will unnecessarily ask France for Keynes in 1922 21. It is starting from what Parvus addresses the problems of the reconstruction of Europe, from his ways and those who have to pay the costs, facing from now on the issue of repairs, which will be burning and decisive for the German and European policy of the next ten years and beyond. « The whole question of reconstruction - he writes - has been put on a false ground by the imperialists of the Ente... But you can get a fair solution to the problem if you are clear about the economic content... *. And he adds: "I appeal to the peoples of the Entente: you are deceived if you believe that you are becoming great through the enslavement of the German people".

Keynes echoes him a year later:

> « A policy that reduces an entire generation of Germany to servitude, that demeans the lives of millions of human beings, that deprives an entire nation of happiness would be hateful and abominable even if it enriched us, even if it did not sowe ruin in the civil life of the entire Eu-
>
> Гора ».

«This chapter will be made of pessimism », — insists Keynes, who writes at the end of 1919, when the hopes that still

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2i9 Ibidem.

20 Ibidem, pp. 221-22.

221 J.M. KEYNES, op. cit, pp. 10-11.

22 PARvus, op. cit., p. 224.

23 Ibidem, p. 226.

They flowed a year earlier from Parvus' pen they had dispersed In the wind:

> «The treaty does not include any provision for the economic reconstruction of Europe, it does not decide anything to include the defeated Central Empires in a good neighborly relationship, nothing to organize the new European states or to save Russia... It is extravagant that the fundamental problem of a Europe that is dying of hunger and disintegrating before their eyes did not interest the Four. Repairs were their main foray into the field of the economy and they regulated this issue as a problem of theology, politics and electoral tactics, dealing with everything but the economic future of the states whose destinies they had in their hands » 24.

The consequences were those known to all until the Second World War and today's situation. And it is singular that two men of such a distant origin and training had warned, such as Parvus and Keynes: the first during and immediately after the end of hostilities when nothing had yet been accomplished, the second when Versailles was already a fait accompli and one could only hope for its revision. The young professor at King's College in Cambridge had come to these conclusions after participating for six months in the Versailles negotiations as an English representative and resigning for opposition to the treaty; Parvus, on the contrary, already fears them even earlier on the basis of his political experience, his economic culture, his incredible capacity for historical prospecting. Both start from concrete data, from statistics and laws of the economy and the market, but both have a sense of events and history and, if on this Parvus has a tendency to build projects that are projected beyond everyday life, while Keynes prefers observation and immediate deduction, both have the consciousness of Europe and a global vision of the economy, both place the emphasis on productivity rather than on the account of give and take. In this vision they will proceed side by side until the early tenties in a distance interview in which one precedes and completes the other, with different voices

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24 J.M. KEYNES, op. cit., Pp. 182-83.

But basically agree, like two of the most lucid minds of the time.

PARVUS *:

“Reconstruction will be achieved in the fastest and best way... if all the peoples of Europe and the whole world take part in it. It is

Solve... It is less than anything that it is a question of money; it is a question of world production... this work is necessarily approached from a historical point of view, a world base. It is about the reconstruction of the productive forces... Financial, economic, commercial means,

Tec-

Nici must be made available to the populations

Try from the war...» (225)

KEYNES in 1919:

« A Europe

Torn apart by internal disagreements and international hates.. She fights, dies of hunger, loots, lies... (199). What can we do?... First of all, escape the atmosphere and methods of Paris... We therefore propose to those who think that the peace of Versailles cannot last a new program... the revision of the treaty, the settlement of inter-allied debts, an international loan and the reform of the currency, the relations between Central Europe and Russia... (205/6) credits granted to Europe by the nations that have suffered the least for the purpose of universal pacification... a general loan to try to reconstitute a part of the working capital...»(9).

PARV

« At the time of Germany's greatest military triumphs, German social democracy spoke out for a peace without annexations and reparations. Now that Germany is defeated, a peace will be dictated to it with annexations and repa-

Rations. We will have to submit to the will of the winner, there is nothing left to do. But the condition that we must refuse in any case is that the repairs are pre-

* All the quotes reported here to explain the comparison-parallelism between Parvus and Keynes are literally removed from: PARUS, Der Friede und der Sozialismus, Berlin, December 1918, and: J.M. KEYNES, The Econo-mic Consequences of the Peace, London, 1920). In parentheses the numbers of the relative pages.

> Taken from the wages of the workers, from the incomes of the middle class or even at the expense of our industrial development. If the industrial development of Germany is affected, the economic premises of the aid work are buried
>
> German... » (227-28).

KEYNES:

> « The annual surplus that the German workforce Can
> Producing for internal improvement cannot serve either in theory or in practice as a measure for the tribute it can pay abroad... One cannot overlook, among other things, the fact that the lowering of the conditions of existence acts on the productivity of a country...» (169).

PARVUS:

> « Europe and America are already suffering and will soon suffer even more from the low wages of the low-demanding working masses of East Asia; what madness to want to transform even Germany from a flourishing industrial and civil country into a Chinese Coolieland through repairs! The first requirement of socialism in the face of economic reconstruction is that favorable working conditions are ensured...» (227)
> The world does not suffer from a lack of labor, but from a bad subdivision and insufficient use of them.
> The war turned overproduction into a lack of production. Peace will restore the conditions of before and will increase productive forces beyond the previous volume if development in individual countries is not prevented by force » (228).

KEYNES:

> "Nations capable of providing assistance: the neutrals,
> The United Kingdom and. especially the United States
> They must provide
> Credits to the belligerent states of continental Europe, whether they are allies or enemies... (228) In this way, Europe will receive the minimum of liquid resources necessary for the revival of its hopes and economic organization.
>
> He will be able to use his great intrinsic wealth for the benefit of workers. It is useless for the moment to draw a more detailed plan...» (229).

PARVUS:

> ". What burdens can be imposed on the German people when they are deadly exhausted and hungry and every activity

Industrial is paralyzed? Provide him with food, pri-materials-leave him alone, give him a sense of security, of confidence in the future, let him develop freely and he will provide treasures that will benefit the whole world...» (228-29).

KEYNES:

«If the Allies were willing to support Germany's trade and industry for five or ten years, grant it large loans, provide it with ships, raw materials, food, open markets; if they were willing to... make it one of the most industrial nations in Europe, even if not in the world, they could undoubtedly obtain a much more substantial allowance, because Germany is susceptible to a very high productivity...» (229).

PARVUS:

«The devastation and destruction spread throughout Europe are just as many productive tasks... Look at the great Russia!... Think of Central Asia, the

Siberia, to
Caucasus! » (229).

KEYNES:

"If we deliberately aim at the impoverishement of the-
Central Europe, revenge, we can predict it, no
It will make you wait. Nothing then can delay, between the forces of the reaction and the desperate convulsions of the revolution, the final struggle before which the horrors of the last war will pale and that will destroy, whoever is the winner, the civilization and progress of our times... (214). The reasoning then suggests to support the forces of order, moderate, which, to the surprise of the whole world, have managed to stay on the edge of the German crater...» (230)

PARVUS:

"Socialism claims the security of law and the-
The order, the defense of the person and private property,
When it is not a means of exploitation, free movement, equal economic rights of peoples, freedom of the seas and free trade... Socialism wants to solve the problem of reconstruction through the development of the production forces of the whole world, through the common solidarity work of the peoples, through the creation of international relations of trade, industry and finance,

> Through the overcoming of military waste everywhere, through a tension of all forces and a general
> Increase in well-being, through social affirmation and the fraternal cultural work of the popular masses. This is the only way to heal the situation. Any deviation from this leads only to an even worse disaster, to economic and political catastrophes » (230).

From this counterpoint, issues, evaluations and forecasts still emerge today of current and general as well as historical interest, as well as, in particular, the conceptions of the two in the face of world problems, so often coincidenting although they belonged to the adverse camps of the defeated and the winners, of socialism and liberalism.

In the « Glocke », in the newspaper « Achtuhrabendblatt » and then in his new magazine « Wiederaufbau » Parvus published at an incessant pace until the whole of 1923 articles and essays on the great political, economic and financial problems of Germany and Europe from the urgent angle of the problem of reparations, but with much broader perspectives and on a solid basis of economic analysis. It outlined a thorough examination of crucial problems such as the restoration of the world market, the European and global political balance, the reconstruction and the modern reorganization of industry and trade. First of all an international loan, an idea that Keynes had already supported: "We are... supporters of an international loan, as it has been supported in certain circles in France, England, Germany and the United States" 23. During the.' 21 Parvus devotes a lot of attention to it, underlining its necessity and urgency for Germany, as well as for the Curopean reconstruction, examining in detail the concrete possibilities, the guarantees to be offered, the modalities and the entity 2. Keynes also returns to it in his A Revision of the Treaty 2, written at the end of the year and released in 22.

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225 J.M. KEYNES, Les conséquences économiques de la paix, op. cit., PP. 225-226.

226 PARVUS, AuW, pp. 80-162 et passim; Der Wirtschaftse Rettungs-Weg, Berlin 1921, pp. 5, 14-16, 32-37 et passim.

27 J.M. KEYNES, Revision of the peace agreements, Munich-Leipzig 1922, P. 64 (ed. ted.).

However, for Parvus, the loan is configured not only and not so much as a relief to meet the payments owed to the Allies, but as a tool to give credit to the industry, to get it back in shape and achieve that productivity that could allow, it alone, the payments and, beyond them, the reconstruction of Germany and Europe. It is interesting to note that Luigi Einaudi was of the same opinion, who, as for the allowances, wrote in November "21: "Germany's ability to cope with them is determined by its production capacity and not by the course of the mark" 28. As we have seen, this constructive and positive approach, not of mere give-to-have money, had been advanced by Parvus in his cited Der Friede und der Sozialismus of '18, and then affirmed by Keynes in his classic essay on the consequences of peace of '19. With regard mainly to the way of paying the allowances, Parvus since '18, consistent with his approach, advocates the payment in goods, something that even Einaudi considers as the only feasible and positive in his lucid writing of February '21: "The Allies seem to have a sacred horror of German goods, even given away. But since Germany has no other way to pay for anything but the goods... it is pure to have the idea of being able to remove from us the bitter cup of the goods paid to us as compensation » 22. Keynes, while admitting the probable necessity and also the positivity in relation to his vision of European economic recovery, in the Economic Consequences... he proves to be hesitant 20, while in the Revision of the Treaty of the

'20 now accepts the thing with words that more or less repeat those of Einaudi 21, The latter, in the aforementioned essay, had denounced the absurdity of the 12% duty on goods exported from Germany, speaking of the thing as "all a mess"*; in the same way Parvus judges it, who however wonders if

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228 L. EINAUDI, The disruptive effects of the fall of the mark (18.11. 1921) in: L. EINAUDI, Economic and political chronicles of a thirty-year period (1893-1925), VI, Turin 1963, p. 445.

229 L. EINAUDI, The enigma of the German indemnity (5.2.1921), op. cit., Pp. **29-30.**

230 J.M. KEYNEs, Les conséquences.., op. cit., PP. 153-169.

231 J.M. KEYNES, Revision..., op. cit., Pp. 167-192 et passim.

232 L. EINAUDI, op. cit., p. 30 (17.2.1921).

"This irrational and pernicious tortuous way" does not hide the intention "to participate in the development of German industry", "looking for a unit of measurement, a thermometer of such development" 233

And here he reiterates a proposal already previously advanced, on which he will insist with various adjustments throughout the year and afterwards, placing it at the center of the solution of the problem of repairs and of the same German and European reconstruction. « I think the solution is as simple as ever. Do you want to take part in the industrial development of Germany? The idea of the consortium, which also calls it Treu-handgesellschaft and Deutscher Konzern, was born in Parvus of the needs to the collapse of the mark, from the need to give guarantees for ' foreign credit aid without which Germany will not be able to provide the large impostile payments in the coming years » 25, and is accompanied by its plans for a monetary reform and a fiscal reform. All these themes, also treated in detail and supported by the relative statistical data in the writings of '21, are condensed by him in the essay Der Rettungs Wirtschaftlicheweg published at the end of '21. Einaudi also wrote in September '22: "...Germany must balance the budget and initiate monetary reform" 26, and that it was not the exchange rate, but the stabilization of the mark and "the development of production and consumption" 257 that mattered.

These particular aspects of the great debate on the German situation, and therefore necessarily also European of those years, even if today they may seem "dated", while they are not for intrinsic reasons and for their value of "historical lesson" to economists who, like Keynes, will learn from it for the purposes of "new economics", have been mentioned to indicate how many connections of research and meditation on the ma-

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233 PArvus, Ausfuhrzoll oder?... in AuW, pp. 14, 15.
234 Ibidem.
25 PARVUS, Der Wirtschaftse Rettungsweg, op. cit., p. 16.
236 L. EINAUDI, op. cit., p. 807.
237 PARVUS, op. cit., pp. 149-151; L. EINAUDI, op. cit., ibidem.

The crude teria of the problem posed by the first post-war period united the thought of Parvus with what is now considered a classic of

Keynes

In the Wirtschaftliche Rettungsweg Parvus gives a summary of his own conception of the German economic situation, of international economic ties, of the prospects for overcoming the world crisis, based, as he had always done, on an exemplary use of statistics. His program, in which

Fidea of the Deutscher Konzern is central and rests on a detailed elaboration on which it is not possible to dwell here, but it was not implemented, although it remained only Parvusian for other aspects it met with the ideas of Keynes, Einaudi and other economists also German and in this sense it had results. On this ground there would be a lot to dig, already starting from the writings of Parvus at the turn of the century to reach Hellferich, Schacht, the Key-nes of '36 (The general Theory of Employment, Interest and

Money). But it is an investigation that exorbitats from our assumption. Here the coincidences with Keynes have been hinted at and, more often, the anticipations of Parvus, which is what seems to us enough to put him back in a historical context from which, as already from other pre-

Ceding, was excluded.

ZIP. VIII

ECONOMY AND STATE IN SOCIALISM

Already since 1907 Parvus had addressed these problems in the great essay The Colonial Policy and the Collapse 2s, in which, as in his other previous and subsequent works, to the criticism and rejection of the current economic and political order and its conduct was added the attempt of a positive project, of an alternative political proposal.

The push towards the colonies, he wrote, is generally owed to "overproduction and capitalist competition", but it has also been said that "there is no overproduction, but underconsumption, since the people cannot consume even what they need". Two ways open up: either investing for the colonies, that is, to open up new markets, which not only involves enormous costs, but also disqualifies the continental industry which, instead of manufacturing machines, manufactures pots for a primitive market, and therefore no longer has a technological drive; or using these same capital within to make workers also consumers, raising their standard of living, thus finding in them a new market, completely sufficient and with the advantage of creating a new society, albeit still capitalist, but more prosperous and advanced: "The worker who receives a higher salary is a better consumer than the Negro of Africa". We'll have to wait for Keynes' new economics to hear such reasoning.

This, however, presupposes a complete reversal of the policy of the ruling classes and a completely different strategy than the

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O: 238 PARVUS, The Colonial Policy and the Collapse, Leipzig 1907.
All related quotes are taken from this text.

Usual parliamentary opposition by the SPD, a coordinated strategy aimed at achieving what is already mature, namely that: "the needs of workers have become in themselves the needs of productive development". Pointing to this objective, Parvus underlines the "political tasks that are placed on the German working class for the next period":

> 1) « normal working day of eight hours. Not colonial politics, but social policy»; eight hours
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> They mean « a
>
> New cra... bring health, strength and vital energy... the possibility of a human existence... of education and training, to use political rights »; 2) « free trade and, as a transition, trade pacts on the basis of customs reductions », « first of all, cheap food! »; moreover « the free market will lead to an economic unity of Europe »; 3) « republic and construction of democracy », « Germany must become a republic and then for the first time it will develop as a democratic unitary state; this is on the other hand the premise for the political union of Europe »; 4) « people's militia. It is the best means for the country's defense, it is the least expensive army and serves to consolidate democracy »; 5) taxes in strong progression, « elimination of consumption taxes »; 6) « nationalization of mines and metallurgical industry »; 7) « nationalization of banks ».

“But isn't this the social revolution? Not at all, it is only a program of social reform that follows from capitalist development, the implementation of which, moreover, paves the way for socialism. It was something very similar to the project of workers' democracy supported during the Russian revolution of 1905, only that, instead of the violent seizure of power, the Spa had to be made a realization, as president of the proletariat, with a vigorous and renewing policy. The capitalists themselves had to understand that they had no other choice, since: "This is how revolutions are born! Following the resistance that the dominant power of a country opposes to its own economic and political development ».

Of course Parvus manages to outline this alternative, which in any case remains the most interesting and accomplished project that the socialism of the time could offer, through a detailed examination of the accumulation made by capitalism in Germany, of industrial capital and its evolution in

Financial capital, of the stages and costs of colonization, of the problems of the market and of competition, especially American and, in its forecasts, soon also Japanese. As for America (and means the USA), "its great economic advantage is democracy. It has made the political and economic unity of the country possible... it has ensured that workers in America receive a higher standard of living than in Europe, which, among other things, has also greatly benefited industrial development ». And instead: "in Europe you can't take twenty-four hours by train without coming across one or more borders... The curse of Europe is its past... this division into small states... but also the idea of the political and economic unity of Europe will make its way against all the powers. This seems all the more necessary to him as, to the competition of the US and soon of Japan, that of Russia will be added: "The power of the autocracy is broken forever. Russia is facing democratic development... Even more grandiose, however, is its next economic development. And, in fact, the period that was beginning saw an extraordinary economic, industrial, cultural development of Russia that will continue until the war. It was the period of Minister Stolypin, not by chance murdered in 1911 in an attack on which the shadow of a dark connivence between left and right weighs.

“Democracy, European unity, free trade! », such was in 1907 in Germany the watchword proposed to the Spd by Parvus in opposition both to its political routine, and to its fringes of revolutionary velleitarianism, to beat the line

Reactionary: low

Wages, protectionism, colonialism, empireLism. « The push towards the colonies is the flight of capital from its own protectionist system, which at the same time, however, moves to the colonies. This is imperialism. An industrial state and a colonial rule separated from the rest of the world by a customs wall », but « this utopian policy of capital becomes a danger to the peoples; since it seeks to hinder the development of the world market by authority, it can lead to catastrophes on the market and explosions of violence, as has already happened ».

This is the connection that Parvus saw between colonial policy and the collapse of the system and certainly not as a self-consequence

Matica and short-term, but like the dead end towards which capitalism was historically heading. Especially for Europe:

« The future of European industry is not in the colonies, but in the economic union ». How many decades, wars, revolutions would have passed on it before this idea made its way without yet finding an effective realization. The theme of colonialism was here gutted by him in all its commercial, industrial, financial, social and political implications in a discourse that well enucleated the concept of imperialism.

The book came out at the beginning of 1907: only in 1910 Rudolph Hilferding will publish his classic study Capital Finance-

And in 1913 the Luxemburg its Accumulation of capital "°. They will focus the analysis on the genesis of imperialistic capitalism, while Parvus had looked at the consequences of it and the possibility of an alternative direction. It will be in those years that these problems will have a wider audience and a whole series of writings by Kautsky, Marchlewski, Ra-dek, etc. will be published. Lenin will only partially reap the fruits in his late and arid "popular essay" 2*1

. Of the high opinion that he immediately

He made the book of Parvus parla a same letter of February 7, 1908 to his sister: «.. I'm surprised not to see ads for a translation by Parvus (Kolonialpolitik und Zusammenbruch).

Is it possible that no one takes the initiative? I could get in touch with the author, here abroad » 22. But the Russian edition, without him knowing, was already about to come out 243

Also this time Parvus was touched by the part of the pionic-re, but not - although this is already relevant - only for these problems of colonialism and imperialism, but in the aurd vision, contained in his book, of a modern capitalism, felt of the need for the consensus of the masses and on it

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239. R HILFERDING, Das Finanzkapital. A study about the youngest Development of capitalism, 1910.

290 R. LUXeMbUrG, Die Akkumulation des Kapitals. A contribution to the Economic Declaration of Imperialism, 1913.

211 "Popular essay" is the subtitle of the work. V LENIN, Imperial-Lizm, kak novejšij etap capitalizma, 1917.

242 V.I. LENIN, Pis'ma k rodnym, op. cit., p. 123. See also V. LENIN Op. compl., v. 37, Rome, p. 272.

243 PARVUS, Kolonial'naja politika i krušenie capitaličeskogo stroja, SPB 1908.

poggiante nei propri stessi interessi mediante l'instaurazione di una democrazia sociale. L'alternativa a ciò, sosteneva Parvus, non era che il « crollo »: ossia le guerre, le rivoluzioni riuscite o fallite. La storia darà molte di queste lezioni e in parte questa via è ormai accettata da molti paesi, mentre Parvus è stato dimenticato. Fu allora che egli cominciò a vedere in modo nuovo l'antinomia capitalismo o socialismo, potere capitalista o potere operaio, ordine costituito o rivoluzione; un'antinomia che per la sinistra socialista e per gli altri fondatori della dottrina del movimento comunista — Lenin, Trockij, la Luxemburg, Martov e minori — era inamovibile: da una parte la fortezza del capitale, dall'altra il proletariato all'assalto per il « sol dell'avvenire ». Parvus, grazie alla sua esperienza economica non solo teorica ma anche pratica, è molto più consapevole della complessa macchina del capitalismo moderno e delle sue prospettive, nonché più sensibile agli umori e agli orientamenti delle masse lavoratrici.

Questo ripensamento lo occupò almeno per quattro anni nell'elaborazione di tutta una nuova strategia della rivoluzione sulla base delle passate esperienze del movimento in Germania e in Russia, ma anche dei nuovi sviluppi del capitalismo imperialistico. Come avrebbe scritto nel 1925 l'organo della III Internazionale: « Egli riconobbe precocemente che determinati fenomeni economici e politici emergenti negli stati capitalisticamente sviluppati e il loro intreccio sul mercato mondiale e nella politica mondiale segnalavano un nuovo gradino di sviluppo del capitalismo »[244]. L'ultima fase, e decisiva, di questa sua ricognizione, era cominciata con il saggio sul mercato mondiale del grano in relazione alla crisi agraria per la « Neue Zeit », che non lo pubblicò, perché troppo specialistico; e poi con i saggi usciti in opuscoli nel 1908-09 sulla lotta sindacale, sulla produzione capitalistica e il proletariato, sul socialismo e la rivoluzione sociale, e su altri temi inerenti, testi che appariranno come opere unitarie più tardi con i rispettivi titoli di *Lo Stato, l'industria e il socialismo* e *Lotta di classe del proletariato*[245]. Già quanto Parvus

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[244] C. ZETKIN, *Helphand-Parvus*, « Kommunistische Internationale », 1925, N. 1, p. 88.

[245] PARVUS, *Der Staat, die Industrie und der Sozialismus*, Dresden 1910; *Der Klassenkampf des Proletariats*, Berlin 1911.

He began to anticipate it in fragmentary writings, in articles in various newspapers, in the Glosses of culture and politics, which will appear in 1908 248 on Sundays on the "Vorwärts", it was enough to arouse surprise, misunderstanding and harsh controversy again. Again he stood out, beyond, further ahead of the ongoing discussion, he started from a more advanced point of view and gave a new perspective.

He had everyone against it. To the Luxemburg and the left he reproached the Revolutionsmacherei; to Kautsky, the puerile idea that one day the final battle should come with the disappearance of capitalism as a Deus ex theatrical machina.

As for his attempt to answer the question of what socialism could be as an economic-political system functioning as an alternative to capitalism, it was not even transposed; and, those who understood it, considered it the result of a sick mind.

Such was the fate of his two books, nor is it surprising, thinking that he wondered about the new economic model brought by socialism, something that no one had ever done so far, which has not yet been clarified in our days. Is socialism the simple reversal of capitalism, in the sense that property passes to the state as a representative of the community, or is it a scientifically superior system and only as such historically justified?

To answer these questions, Parvus summarizes the conceptions that he had matured in twenty years of participation in the German and Russian socialist movement, he sets them up and exposes them in a series of short chapters that touch on fundamental points such as the mass political strike, the unions, the revisionism, the trade crises, the world market, customs protectionism and colonialism, as well as, of course, the development of the labor movement. If it has made progress in Germany, he notes, capitalism has also modernized and become more efficient. At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, no one can no longer delude himself that it will collapse by itself. Far from it, capitalism has shown to possess great vitality. The danger to the system, says Parvus, does not lie in crises

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246 PARVus, Kulturpolitischen Glossen, « Vorwärts», February-May, 1908.

Economic, but in wars: "The great struggles on the world market can easily lead even to a war. War exacerbates all the contradictions of capitalism. A world war, therefore, today can only end with a world revolution » 2.

But revolution in what way? Meanwhile, he recited the requiem for the barricade revolution: "The social revolution does not have the task of implementing socialism with violence... Armed capitalism with imposing means of defense and entrenched in the state cannot be overwhelmed with a battle. Like the battles of modern warfare, the battles of the revolution have also become more massive, richer in losses and have acquired a completely different imposing breadth in space and time. The cavalry attack has also exhausted its role in the revolution...

Modern battles require first of all scientific direction, a conscience of circumstances, exact assessment of forces and possibilities, caution and prudence, coldness and patience and of course still the maximum self-denial, as the Japanese were already able to conquer Port Arthur only over the corpses of their army. The barricade fighter of the old days was a good figure, but it's not enough for us anymore » 248. For the purposes of the historical strategy of the socialist parties, he emphasized his innovative thesis, practiced many decades later by the communists:

« in the twentieth century the proletariat leads its great battles with combined arms » 249.

He had understood before everyone that: "We are in the transition phase towards the period of mass actions. These lead to an extension of the political problem of social democracy... Marxism gives us the key and the method to scientifically draw the transformations of the social revolution from capitalist development. Solving this scientific problem on the ground of an analogy with modern capitalism is the main theoretical problem of the current generation » 250. « We do not want to reach socialist society through violence » 231.

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347 PARVUS, Klassenkampf des Proletariats, Berlin 1911, p. 147.

248 Ibidem, p. 149.

243 Ibidem, p. 109.

250 Ibidem, p. 4.

231 Ibidem, p. 216.

This could take place if necessary, but it simply represented an episode in the historical process of the revolution. In any case, "the conquest of state power in itself is not enough, but we need the democratization of the state and the wider development of the autonomy of the municipalities" 22. And that's not enough either. « We conceive the same workers' organizations, the unions, social democracy, the cooperatives as an integral part of the new form of state. We do not conceive of socialization simply as statization, but as a complex system of economic organizations, which will be closely intertwined with the complicated political system » 253

This conception of the role of the state, already indicated at the time of the Russian revolution of 1905, and the same attempt to address the nodal problem of the socialist state formation were something completely new in Marxist thought, which even later with Leninism will evade it with serious consequences. Parvus was also the first to see trade unions and other organizations not only as an end in themselves, but as decisive components of the new state. But also with regard to this new "master" state instead of the "guardian state" he already warned against his omnipotence and thought of a possible correction of it, guarantees against his possible arbitrariness:

> « In addition to the increase in its political power, the state receives unprecedented economic power and in any case the entire industrial population with its wages and consumption depends on it. The state appropriates everything, forces everything under its power; and the abstract idea of the development of a state to which everything must be subordinated can become for the peoples a calamity no less than the accumulation of capital is today. Through nationalization, in essence, only the form of capitalist domination changes, not itself. We need — certainly only within certain limits — the concentration of production under the power of the state, but we also need powers that we can oppose the concentrated power of the state.
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> It seems dun-
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> That it is appropriate to clarify the guarantees that arise against the pressure of the state on the popular masses...» 251.

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252 PARVUS, The State, Industry and Socialism, Berlin 1910, P. 72.

253 Ibidem, p. 163.

254 Ibidem, p. 150-51.

Exceptional and presages are these words of Parvus read after three quarters of a century, when the state of "real socialism" represents the most faithful and horrible mirror of what he feared. And all the more so they are prophetic in that he wrote them not only for a legitimate theoretical fear, but also because he had already seen in Leninism the seed of the monstrous mutation that will be born later. Yet Marx had already warned that the working class cannot simply seize the ready-made state car and set it in motion for its own purposes. While The-

Nin, the Bolsheviks and successors will do just that, accentuating their powers and domination worse, Parvus already before 1910 feels all the weight of this cardinal question: "The state problem of socialism discussed here by us only gives us the political formula of the social revolution, but not yet its solution" 255

In these books he shows that he has reached a historical vision of the revolution, a broad and open vision, in which the masses and mass parties are protagonists. Despite the many pertinent and foreshadowing observations, despite the great merit of having posed the problem of what socialism could be as an alternative economic system and the character of its state, he could not nevertheless give that project he pursued, because he was still a prisoner of the Marxist thesis according to which the industrial working class or, even worse for a definition of class, the "proletariat" as a mass of workers, is an heir to the bourgeoisie better than the mother; and of the other thesis, according to which socialism for the purposes of production and progress is a technically better machine than capitalism. So far this has never been demonstrated and much less in the countries of so-called "real socialism", while one can, on the contrary, wonder if the proletariat and the same more defined working class are a historical class like the bourgeoisie, or instead a class, or a group of classes, unstable, fluctuating, and, above all, not a producer of culture and therefore always subordinate, condemned to see its most capable elements continuously transmigrate in the opposing class, a class whose continuous impoverishment, a century and a half of the Marxian theorization of it, has never happened in

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255 Ibidem, p. 164.

Terms of purchasing power, of living conditions, but of capable men at every level; whose direction has always been of those who, even coming from it, had become "bourgeois" and "intellectual" if they were not already of this extraction as it appears from Marx to today's leaders after over a hundred years of history of the organized and politicized proletariat. So, then, not even a social formation, but a social condition.

But these protests could not then come from the mar-xists, as could not come those of not having foreseen the omnipotence of bureaucracy (a theme moreover touched by him in the criticism, as insufficient, of the warning of Engels directed simply towards the corruption of the same) and of having ignored the planning. The latter in reverse (and we are in the

1910) appears implicitly considered there where Parvus draws the "directive lines of a socialist political economy", which for him contemplate: "1. development of social needs... Not man-custom and abstinence, but joie de vivre and momentum... Awaken the sense of beauty and art. The richer the life of the people, the higher the culture, the richer the society, the greater its productive forces..., 2. Organization of social consumption...; 3. Beauty of the social forces of work and their education...; 4. Development of social production; 5. Organization of social production...» 26. In the chapter on banks and industry he states: « The 20th century is the era of organization » 257.

The protests that then opposed his two books were pretentious, petty and inconsistent, the result of a preconceived and distracted reading, of ignorance and delay.

A later moment of his thought is found in the series of writings gathered under the general title Labor Socialism and the World Revolution. Letters to German workers, which came out in 1919, a crucial year for Germany and Europe,

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230 PARVUs, Der Staat.., op. cit., pp. 32-33 (ed. 1919).
257 Ibidem, p. 57 (ed. 1910).

258 PARVUS, Der Arbeitersozialismus und die Weltrevolution. Letters to the German workers, I. The economic overcoming of capitalism; II. Socialism and Bolschewism (Olten, 1919); III. The development of the socialist economic systems; IV. The Peace and Socialism, Berlin 1919. All related quotations are understood from these texts.

Marked above all by the frontal clash between the left and the right. Parvus wrote:

> «For generations the proletariat has expected the revolution to realize socialism and today the revolution makes its victorious path through the world - as the preface said -. « All the revolutions so far have resulted in a domain of the popular masses and have ended with the collapse of this domain. It is not said that this is no longer possible even after the experiences so far... The war has provided power to the proletariat, but will the proletariat know how to use the power of the state?... It is a matter of following a policy that wins the consensus of ever wider social strata; the art of state politics of the proletariat consists first of all in putting the great economic problems in the foreground... in this sense my letters are designed. I want to strive first of all to clarify the great problems of socialism, the way in which they are to be solved and in which socialism can be implemented.

On January 15 in Berlin, Rosa Luxem-burg was murdered, of which Parvus had not shared the abstract extranzist theses for a long time, but she was a lucid and democratic mind and her tragic death made the Spartac movement all the more dangerous. Without its guidance, it focused on adventure and oriented itself on the soviets, also because of the work of Radek, Ioffe and C° who were in Germany, turning against the socialist government the ferment and restlessness of the masses.

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The Hungarian revolution followed the course of the genre. To many throughout Europe, the Bolshevik upheaval, flying the flag So-
Vietica, seemed the most suitable and decisive model, the model to follow. Parvus writes his letters against this suggestion, this hypnosis founded on ignorance and misunderstanding, but propagating in the masses and in the socialist parties themselves. He remembers that he was the first to conceive and develop the theory of the Soviet in an organic way, but this in the conditions of Russia in 1905, not of Germany and Europe, which even then and even more so now in 1918-19 could not see an organ capable of replacing that parliament that had a long history and "through the working class will be democratized", since "to itself

It is up to him to give him power and importance to the extent that it exceeds the economic power of the capitalist class. And in the same

Lenin's Russia what was the Soviet now?

« Abroad it is believed that this Soviet system finds

His strength in the exclusive defense of interests

Of the masses

Workers, which is a representation of workers, soldiers and peasants. But that's basically false... The deprivation of the rights of capitalists serves the Soviet government only as a cover to implement the deprivation of rights of the popular masses... The workers, soldiers, peasants, whose sovereignty Bolshevism fills his mouth, vote only the grassroots soviets... This farce of popular representation is certainly not proof that the Russian people are mature for socialism, it is rather a document of the lack of parliamentary maturity of it. Since in no country a parliamentary history the people allow themselves to be so brazenly deprived of their rights ».

« Is it therefore really advisable to adopt this system of the Russian republic of soviets? Has Europe struggled so far in its culture to the point of creating electric light to end up eating Muscovite taw? ". « From a struggle for the dictatorships of the proletariat was born a struggle for the power of individual people... So the circle closed and the revolution

Russian,

In the manner of the great French revolution, through the domination of intellectuals, of the men of dogma with their kingdom of reason and with their mass terrorism, she fell into a sort of cesarism » ... «With the allyed motto of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Bolshevism implements its most cunning infamy. The dictatorship of the proletariat, to put it briefly, lies in the fact that the workers, who form the majority, with the help of their class organizations dominate the state and, if an armed power opposes it, fights it with the armed power on its side. So weapons against weapons and not weapons against opinions or against popular movements. The dictatorship of the proletariat does not worry about suffocating democracy, but about developing it as pos-

Sibile. This is the law of large numbers.

«I declared to Lenin already at the beginning of his career in government, that he did not represent the ideas of Marx, but those of a Pobedonoshev. Since then he has also had to resort to the means of struggle of a prosecutor of the holy Synod and overcome these too for intolerance and brutality. Social law at the bottom and autocracy at the top: this corresponds to Russian traditions: historically as far as the noble landowners are concerned, as with regard to the absolutist government in its erecting on the mir, the peasant community.

This system had in Russia in its theorists and its statesmen, the best known of which was the prosecutor Pobedonoscev... Bolshevism in Russia has historical premises. It stems from the confusion of social conditions, from the fact that the Rus-

It didn't make a socialist revolution, but a revolution

Bourgeois. Lenin and Trotsky are to blame for the fact that, instead of becoming clearly aware of this Russian originality, they have increasingly disguised themselves with socialistic ideas, they allow a pogrom economy instead of fighting it, they present the brutalities of a plebally unleashed as a dictatorship of the proletariat, they encourage the dirtiest pseudo-proletarian cult under the name of Marxism... Bolshevism wants to realize its own social program, which it believes to have distilled from Marxism, with the help of state power, albeit against the will of the working class itself.

To the will of the working class he opposes his alleged best knowledge. The latter rests on the machine guns
‘Supports workers' organizations only in
How much they submit to him... The Russian proletariat is no longer the working class on which socialism is built; it has been transformed into a Roman plebs, imploring bread and entertainment... Bolshevism is one of the most monstrous phenomena of modern promiscuous cultures: grotesque, despite its horror, like a Chinese mask... It thinks by antithesis, knows no nuances, only black and white, a fundamental change that takes over from morning to night, and believes that it has implemented socialism when it has turned civil society upside down...».

To this total negative judgment of the Leninist experiment Parvus opposed a completely different design for socialism: "The main difficulty lies not in replacing capitalist property with collective property, but in transforming capitalist production into socialist production. Expropriation is the least, organization is everything », with these words began not by chance the series of four letters. What he calls "the overcoming of capitalism" must "develop as a new society of workers' organizations", first of all create through them "an economic power that is superior to private property and can assert itself in competition with it". Parvus

Svi-

This project, which could be said to be said in detail as a growing alternative society within the system, warning that "we must be cautious on the issue of nationalizations", that eventually one can only think of them as far as mining, the steel industry and communications are concerned. Socialism "must be seen as a progress compared to capitalism, just as capitalism appears a progress compared to the forms of eco-

Previous nomics ». Otherwise what's the pros? First of all: "without democracy no socialism is conceivable! ".

> “It would be bad for socialism if it could not admit any opposition. To solve the great problems of socialism in the most complete way possible, we need first of all public criticism, the material and spiritual collaboration of all strata of the working people, the cooperation of technology and science, the press and the school. To express myself in a drastic way I will say that the proletariat needs bourgeois culture to implement its socialist plans and will have it and it will be given to it with joy if it shows that it is determined to use its Power in the interest of the community... Socialism criticizes democracy because it is insufficient, not because it considers it useless. Since socialism moves economic power to the side of the masses, it first needs the full development of democracy with its parliamentary forms, its freedoms, its party struggle, its public opinion, the participation of everyone in the tasks of the state community ».

In this drawing, with exceptional historical foresight, Parvus assigns a primary place to individual freedom to be protected in every way, such as that of economic initiative and trade, from the growing omnipotence of the modern state.

Against this danger, as has been seen, he had already warned in the writings of 1910. Now the question seems all the more current to him in the face of the spectacle offered by the Bolsheviks, who "wanted to tear down the bell tower from the top" and want to rebuild under the rubble, using the same state foundations, changing only the name, believing to realize socialism as one "turn a coat". The centralized and police superstate that will be its monstrous outcome; and the regime, which Trotsky himself expelled but not repentant will call "state capitalism", will fully agree with Parvus whose project can be defined as genuinely social democratic if this term is taken in its historical co-belief, freeing it from the degenerations it had, but also from the discredited that the Communist International of Moscow and its Russian Bolshevik leaders threw into it, whose only merit, as Parvus himself writes in these letters, was to "keep power" with weapons.

In close connection with the socialist problem of fon-

Do, economic and political, always remain for Parvus the big questions of the unity of Europe, of its relations with Russia and, finally, of the danger of German revanscism. As for the first one, it is still worth rereading what he wrote in May of 21:

> There are only two possibilities: either the unification of Western Europe or the domination of Russia... Or Europe
>
> Western maintains the position of industrial leadership, and for this purpose must politically unite, or submit economically, politically and culturally to the great Russia, whose borders will extend from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic » 259.

The problem and drama lie in the fact that Russia, whatever its regime, does not allow us to have illusions about its attitude. The scholar of it and his

Native Parvus:

> « What Russia means has been shown to us by the political history of Europe and now the Genoa conference shows it to us again. The Russian delegation came to Genoa as a representative of a political system that stands in stark contrast to the conception of the state in Europe and America; it came as the representative of a state whose army goes barefoot and does without the necessary armament; as a representative of a people who are starving, and yet it dared to intervene in a way that can almost be compared to a Diktat to all the states of the world.
>
> What will happen when Russia's conditions are put back in order and it will come out of poverty? The first thing that the Russian government will do in any case, whether or not the Soviet regime remains, if the economic conditions of the country will improve,
> It will be the armament of his army. La
> The first industry that Russia will develop will be that of war.
> So, in a time that can be expected, Russia
> Will in fact be able to dictate his will to the whole world » 280.

Keynes himself, who even in The economic consequences of the Peace had warned against Bolshevism exported to Europe, now had illusions: "An extraordinary expe-

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250 PARVUS, An die französischen Deutschhasser, 23.5.1921; in AuW, pp. 200-201.

260 PARVUS, op. cit., pp. 292-93.

The development of socialism is developing » 281, To which Einaudi replied: « By now the disaster has happened — and indeed Keynes is too lenient in words, when he says that an experiment of socialism is underway » 282.

With regard to the second great danger looming over Europe: German revanscism and reactionary involution in Germany, Parvus often raised his warning, stronger and more specific than Keynes had done in the most cited work, already starting from the writings of 1917-19. Already in those years he has explicit and prophetic words also in this regard:

> "States can be annihilated, but nations never. The example from the most recent history is given to us by the Polish nation. Even the German people have at least the same strength, endurance and development capacity as Poland. If you Reich, gave the German people a king of revenge of an intensity that the world has never seen. And push the German people into the arms of Russia... If you annihilate the German state, you show that the only people who defended a just cause in the world war were the German people. Since he fought for the existence of his own state. If you trample on unarmed Germany, you demonstrate that Prussian militarism was a historical necessity... If you annihilate the Reich, make the German people the organizer of the next world war » 283.

The warnings of Parvus and other enlightened minds, in Germany and abroad, in the years of illusions and, as Key-nes wrote, of the "arbitrariness" of the Treaty of Versailles, remained neglected and neglected. The same communists believed more in the social democratic danger than in the national socialist one. History unfortunately proved right to Parvus' most pessimistic predictions for Germany, for Europe, for Russia. Only the lines he had drawn for a monetary reform then flowed through Luther and Hellferich into the restructuring implemented with the Rentenmark by Hjalmar Schacht, which he benefited

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201 J. M. KEYNES, The Bolshevik financial system, in: G. EINAUDI, op. Cit., VI, p. 699.

262 G. EINAUDI, Keynes seems too lenient, ibidem, p. 701,510S

203 PARVUS, An die französischen..., op. cit., p. 199.

The Nazi regime. Also for this economic recovery he had operated his magazine « Wiederaufbau », while facing a broader battle for the unity of Europe and economic cooperation, for disarmament and peace guarantees, for a modern industry that focused on domestic consumption and full employment, for a new balance of the world market, for economic relations with Russia, also aimed at giving birth to embryos for his transition from Asian despotism to a democratic socialist structuring; a battle that Parvus led, in alliance with republican and liberal forces, in the sign of that democratic socialism that he had always pursued. Everything was then lost and submerged to resurface again after the second carnage, because these were and remain some of the basic problems of contemporary history, which he had the fortune to face at their birth and to signal their inescapableness.

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